



THE
SEVEN SAGES,
TRANSLATED

out of Prose into Scottish meter
by JOHN ROLAND, in
DALKEITH.

PROVERBS, V.

¶ *Ne intenderis malitia mulieris, quia novissima illius amara quasi absinthium: longè fac ab ea viam tuam quia lingua eius acuta quasi gladius anceps, & pedes eius descendunt in mortem.*



EDINBURGH,

Printed by Andro Hart,

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THE
SEVEN SAGES
TRANSDATED

out of prose into verse
BY JOHN ROLAND
DUBLIN

PROVERBS

The following is a list of the
several sages who have
been translated into verse
by John Roland.



EDINBURGH

Printed by James Ballantyne



THE PROLOGVE.

SITH into Courtes is curiositie,
Manhead, maners, nurture and courtesie;
If in the head great verrue doth auance,
So in the members I thinke such like should be,
Courage, kindnes, gentrice and honestie,
To doe the head seruice and obeysance,
To God alone also for his pleasance:
And failyeing that all is but fantasie,
For worldly mirth would haue some temperence.

Some comes to Court to serue their King and Queene;
To conques lands some sets their courage cleene:
Great Lords and Lairds the Court would hold in hand
Some their kinsmen to Court causes conuene,
Some for to see, and others to be seene,
With broad bucklers, brawling with birnest brand:
Some there gets foes, others some friendship fand;
Some gets pleasure, other gets tray and teene:
Ye know the Court cannot ay stable stand.

In Court that time was good *Sir David Lindsay*.
In vulgare tongue he bure the bell that day,
To make metet right cunning and expert,
And Master *John Ballentine* sooth to say,
Make him marrow to *Dauid* well we may;
And for the third Master *William Stewart*.
To make in scots he knew right well the airt.
Bishop Durie sometime of *Galloway*,
For his pleasure sometime would take their part.
And I my selfe with small intelligence.

The Prologue.

Thought in that case to shew my diligence,
To manifest my weake wit and ingine,
At these fourefoome, asking leaue and licence,
With hat in hand, kneeling with reuerence,
Me for to learne a lesson or a line,
Of their practicke to me a point propine,
They said, go to, shew some experience,
And I to them therefore promi'd the wine;

So at these foure when I had leue purchast,
To them (said I) what matter is meetest,
For to begin? (quoth they) we would ye drew,
Some Dialogue, or argument that is best,
And that will make your matter manifest.
So folke may know the false tale by the true,
For Dialogues (quoth I) we'll get enew:
And so from them incontinent me drest,
And tooke good-night, and said, good firs, adew.

But yet knew not what my matter should be,
Whether of mirth or yet of grauitie,
After supper to bed I made me boun,
So in my sleepe me thought I saw soothly,
Lady VENVS comming, and spake to me,
And said, I come with thee for to reason,
Therefore my words see that thou not chession,
Touching my state, honour and dignitie,
Forget me not when thou makes thy sermon.

So on the morne when time was for to rise,
I thought I would begin mine enterprise,
And remembred on Lady VENVS Queene.
Kest in my minde ofter nor once or twyse,
That she bade me with her matter auise,
And I knew small what her matter did meane;
Considering at me her selfe had bene,

I wist

The Prologue.

I wist not well what matter to deuise,
Her for to please, and to escape her teene.

And so at short my pen I tooke in hand,
Began to write at Queene VENVS command,
A little quair, I ken not if ye know it,
Embrowd about with barbarous tearmes bland,
And with trim tearmes most vsed vp on land,
As to the name Dame VENVS Court they call it,
I know not well if euer, sirs, ye saw it,
Deliuerde it vnto my Masters foure,
Who it receiu'd, and readily read ouer,

This little quair when they had read and ended,
Some said that heard they greatly it commended;
And so in haste deliuered it againe,
To euery verse therein they condescended,
And said, they knew therewith none was offended,
Except it was a pridefull poore putane,
At whose words men would take but small disdaine,
Who that found faults, all foure they would defend it,
By word and deed, with might and all their maine.

A proper wench came to me on a day,
One of mine ants, but thereto I said nay,
My booke to borrow greatly she did enquire,
A pledge therefore, she said, she would downe lay,
While she it read within a weeke or tway:
So I granted that thing she did desire;
But in few dayes mine ant begowth to tire,
Her pyot tongue, her poet rounge I should say,
Might suffice well to preach in barne or byre.

My booke againe she brought, and calde it good;
And said, some tearmes was she not vnderstood,

The Prologue.

Because they were so high and curious,
Marueild at me how I durst euer doe it,
Against women to speake so rough and rude,
And said, / trow your minde was furious,
Quoth I, Lady, the matter standeth thus,
When two agrees in one ere they conclude,
On force their talke must be contrarious,

Therefore, Mistresse, / must hold you excused,
I trust, such tearmes before few times ye vsed,
Or at the least, ye came not where they grew,
/ heard some say that ye were greatly ruled,
And ye your thought and minde on such tearmes mused,
Both into Greeke, in Latine and Hebrew,
Now / perceauē that these tales are not trew,
Therefore my selfe truly shall haue the pine,
/ was too bold to cast pearles to the swine.

Then she me prayde with words sweet and fair,
To be so good to take another quaire,
In plainer tearmes, and it in meter make,
Anent women not touching them so sore,
For your request, / said, / would doe more.
Another rolle / chanced in hand to take,
It to performe for that fair Ladies sake,
Made and compilde by the wise Sages seuen,
Who were that time most sapient vnder heauen.

For naturall wit they are all holden in plaine,
The springing Well and onely fresh fountaine,
The perfect ground and root originall,
Of this storie now following but laine,
Therefore my selfe as now I am constraine,
At to translate in our tongue naturall,
Where / it fand into plaine prose at all,

With

The Prologue.

Without colour or feet, now I againe;
In rurall Ryme to set it foorth I shall.

The fault, I said, for her sake I should mend it;
Where shee before with strange tearmes was offended,
I promis'd her of honestie to quite them,
And with toun tearmes my bow it should be bended,
From clearkly tearmes my pen should be suspended,
And in my verse by no way I should write them;
Of this debaite then were wee condescended,
At her desire I shall eschew to dite them.

So wee agreed (quod shee) good sir, a dew,
Quoth I (Ladie) forsooth right sore I rew,
With so dry mouths that wee two should depart,
Quoth shee (but doubt) as I am woman trew,
Some other time my selfe shall you persew,
But not as now, there is time afterward,
When euer yee please (quoth I) welcome mine heart,
For very shame me thought shee changed hew,
Then turnde her backe, and so shee did depart.

Incontinent but any more delay,
I thought it best my pen for to essay,
This little booke in verse for to compile,
Where it before into plaine prose was ay,
If I could finde any good wile or way,
To stir it vp into a better stile:
That I should not this faire Ladie beguile,
Considering the same on hand I tooke.
As yee shall heare, thus I began my Booke.

TO THE READER.

BEcause I was reprooued of before,
 That I should not in Clearklie tearmes glorie,
 But in plaine speach my Booke for to addresse,
 With common talke, but yet neuerthelesse,
 This tale of old I heard which is right true,
 And right wel knwon, that need oft maks vertue,
 Therefore on force because strange tearmes I want,
 I haue no doubt but here they shall be skant,
 Therefore in time I thinke best to deny them.
 Yon faire Ladie, me thinke she sets not by them,
 An other cause I wote right well ye ken,
 For to bring but it's ill that's not there ben,
 Nor there is none I know in all this towne,
 Except hee haue it that can put on a gowne,
 Of a roome tunne none can draw out licour,
 Nor of a foole to make a wise Doctour,
 For why? wit wants where wisedome should come
 Into this cace the matter standeth sa, (fra
 Force me compells strange tearmes to forbear,
 Within my Box there's few to get or leare.
 Where gold is skant, siluer must vs content,
 Euen so it stands but doubt at this present,
 Praying heartly this tale in patience take,
 A man can sell nothing out of his packe,
 But as he hath then present for the time,
 Yee may perceiue that by this rustie ryme,
 Beseeching you good Reader to excuse it:
 Not to detract, nor yet too hie to roose it:
 This would I wish, my friends yee would doe so,
 Then in GOD'S Name to purpose let vs goe.

THE



THE
SEVEN SAGES,
TRANSLATED
out of prose into Scottish
Meeter.



In Elder dayes it hath oft
times bene told,
That Rome hath bene a ci-
tie of the old,
Of cunning Clarks, & won-
der valiant men,
As ancient acts make vs
for to ken,
O'r all the worlde it had
preheminance,

and people made to it obedience,
With great Captains, Kings, Knights & Emperours
bene men of wate, and cruell Conquerours
Of townes and towres: great Villages and Cities,
Triumphing farre aboue their enemies,
Subduing them to lasting seruitude,
Not regarding their linage, kin, nor blood,
Conqueist great realmes, Lordships & rounes braid,

The seven Sages.

Their Common-Well, so marueillous they made,
That all Countries and kingdomes them about.
Of them fell feare great dreadour had and doubt,
That they on force behou'd to make homage,
Or else haue lost both life and heritage.
For they were so repleat of all riches,
Wonne into wars by martiall busines:
They toke no cure of no mans fauour nor fead:
So they became of all the world the head,
And had thereof the whole authoritie,
But this was not the time of Papistrie.
For from that time that Popes were made in Rome
Of all vertue that Citie was made tome,
And day by day from all vertue decreest,
Continually the selfe it aye opprest:
For three strangers rose vp in that Citie,
Which of befoze no wise would suffered bee,
The Common-Well cause they were aye againe,
Wherein therefore they were not thol'd remaine.
But fra Popes came that noble towne within.
It did abound so soze in deadlie sinne,
End that no state to Cleargie was compares.
So well they treated these three vncouth strangers,
Which three were these: the first lurking hatrent.
The second was young counsell and consent:
Singular profite was the third I wish,
Which three was cause to cause Rome goe amisse.
And caus'd it lost the great triumphing name.
And to bee calde the house of worldlie shame.
Lost the great rowmes and worldly possessions.

Tha

The seven Sages.

That they conquest from diuers other crownes;
All such become through wickednes and vice;
Of the Papists, and their foule marchandice,
For they would cause a pound of molten lead,
Bring them againe the weight of gold so red,
And cause the hippes of a dead Potw or skinne,
Absolue you all of your most deadly sinne.
Incontinent in heauen vp to be brought,
Contrare Gods will, whether he would or nought.

¶ But not the lesse, long time befoze these daies
An Emperour was, as the stozie sayes,
Who heght to name Pontianus at right,
A noble man of wisdome and of might,
Guided his realme by wisdome and vertue,
To his people examples dayly shew,
Of wisdome, wit and liberalitie,
Wherethrough the heart of all his folke wonne he,
That none cared to ware with him their life,
Kings daughter he had vnto his wife,
Called Clara, a woman vertuous,
Aire and goodlike, and wonder gracious:
Who a knaue child of him she did consaue,
But him alone, no moe God to them gaue:
Who was called Dioclesiane to name,
Fair and well fauour'd, both of fashion and fame,
Who dayly grew in vertue and goodnes,
Each man him lou'd for his great gentlenes:
For he was courteous, comely, and right kinde,
From all folly alutterly declinde:
When he was seven yere old or nere by,

The seven Sages.

This Emprice tooke a marueilous maladie,
That she behou'd for to take bed on force,
With fore sicknes so troubled was her corce:
Perceiuing well by her intelligence,
For to eschew from death was no defence,
But of her life shortly to haue an end.
So for her spous the Emperour sone she send,
With humble heart, and inwardly praying,
That he would come to hir but tarying,
If euer he would see her vpon liue:
So was fra hand direct sone a missiue,
Poste after poste, where he lay in warfare,
Sone till him came, and could the cause declare.
But more abode, with wonder sozie hart,
With few horse-men, from his campe did depart.
And when he came to the Emprice presence,
She said to him with humble reuerence:
O my good Lord, howbeit that I be sicke,
We licence me mine errand to you speake:
So that it be not onely your pleasour,
And als suchlike vnto your great honour.
He said, Ladie, I see you in disease,
Notwithstanding, say on what euer ye please,
And it shall be to me no villanie,
So it eake not to your infirmitie.
My Lord, she said, this sicknes I perceane,
Ere it depart, will drine me to my graue.
He said, Madame, be ye of good comfort,
We will recouer your health, I trust at short,
For I shall send for all my digne Doctors,
Physicians

The seuen Sages.

Physicians and my Philosophers,
By cunning men, and my Mediciners,
By Chirurgians, and als my Potingers,
By practitioners which are subtle and slye,
That dayly deales with Phlebotomie:
They will consult, and each one als persuaue,
All your sicknes, and so health shall ye haue.
For sicknes is as naturall as heale,
Therefore doubt not that death shall with you deale,
At this present, but ye shall sone recure.
Quoth she, my Lord, of one thing I am sure,
This maladie so holdes me at the heart,
While I be dead, no way it will depart:
Therefore, my Lord, right humble I require,
Ye would encline your heart to my desire.
He said, desire at me what euer ye will,
I will it graunt, though it be contrarie skill,
To comfort you, and helpe you from disease,
Therefore say on, it shall not me displease.
He said, my Lord, I thanke you gretumlie,
Quoth he, Madame, say on, what euer it be.
He said, my Lord, please it your Noble grace,
If my desire, this is the very cace:
When I depart out of this present life,
Will you please to haue another wife:
And as ye know, we haue no child but one,
Nor neuer had, but onely him alone:
Which ou'r all things next to your owne person,
Would were well, to this prouisioun,
After your death with all wit and wisdom,

The seven Sages.

Rule his people, and guide this great kingdome,
And ouer all thing, my Lord, must I require,
Into this point ye will grant my desire:
That your Emprice, perchance what euer she be,
Upon my sonne, haue none authoritie:
No gouernance, power, nor yet guiding,
But ye him put to other nourishing,
Farre from her sight, and from her companie,
To that effect that he may vicelesse be,
Of all vices, and such things as goes wrong,
And ay to be great cunning men among,
My Lord, hartly this humbly I require,
Into this point to fulfill my desire:
For well I know displeasures are to come,
That he shall die, or els he shall be dumme.
Wherethrough onely his life he will recure,
My Lord, I know but doubt this shall be sure,
He said, Ladie, your will ye shall not want,
Though it were moze, right hartly I it grant,
For that is my desire as well as yours:
It shall be done, Madame at your pleasures.
She said, my Lord, I thanke you with mine hart,
God saue your Grace: for now I must depart.
This being said, she toke a fell passion,
And a long space she lay in deadlie swoon:
So in short time withoutten moze remead:
Her naturall debt she complected of dead.
With all triumph her funerall seruice,
Was duely done, as that time was the guise:
Long time after the Emperour made mourning.

The seven Sages.

And all his Court for her sore departing.
No minstrell mirth, nor yet no merinnesse,
Into his Hall was scene, nor no blythnesse,
But heauinesse, great dule and grauitie,
Into the Court, and all the Companie,
For that good Quene all solace was away,
Did weare Dule-wæde each one for yere and day.

MORALITAS.

OF this matter something wee may collect,
Of this Lady hauing so great respect,
And inward loue vnto her sonne alone,
Of her owne health shee tooke but little rest,
But thought shee would his welfare not neglect,
Before her selfe to death she would dispoone.
Which caused her such matters to propoone,
To her husband, for the samine effect,
Her sonne to reigne after that shee was gone.

Also yee may consider the great care,
The thought and minde shee tooke both late and aire,
To ment her sonne shee suffering sore sickenesse,
Prouiding als for his wealth and welfare;
Desiring him of cumbers to bee clare,
With the new Queene should haue none entresse,
Nor shee with him in any businesse,
For some causes that might occurte perchance,
That shee should haue of him no gouernance.

So appeares some parte of prophecie.

The seven Sages.

And great foresight hath bene in this Lady:
Perils to come so perfectly to know,
She being touched with sore infirmity,
Praying to put her sonne from company
Of all the Court, and als of Ladies aw,
And in speciall, from his mother in law:
Inconueniences to eschew that might be,
So she desirde her sonne him for to draw.

The hearty loue also you may persauce,
That this Lady did to her husband haue,
Rendring to him honour and reuerence,
And he to her also all things he gaue,
That she desirde, or at him she would craue:
Not regarding though it had bene offence,
And for her sake, when shee was dead and hence,
He commanded that no blythnes should be,
For yeere and day, into his companie.

Therefore I say to you in mariage,
Both into old, and into tender age,
What euer chance, ye should haue charitie
If ill words come, then let your anger swage,
Giue place to yre, and harbrie not outrage;
Crabed at once no wise ye should both be:
A meeke answere flockins melancholie.
Ye are conjoyn'd one flesh, and sowles two,
Then keepe good loue, the Scripture biddeth so.

How the Emperour committed and deliuered his
sonne to the seven Doctors of *Rome* to learne.

This Emperour vpon a time he lay
Into his bed, and to himselfe could say,
I haue no haires but one sonne to mine aice,

The seuen Sages.

I thinke it best, that he were put to leire,
Since he is young, and into tender age,
To leire wisdom he will take more courage:
After my death this Realme that he may guide,
This I thinke best in time for to provide,
So on the morne he cride after his clothes,
And in due time but more abode vppose:
Caus'd call his Lords, and counsell to him soone,
In this matter what they thought to be done,
Shewing at length to them the whole matter
To his Ladie, what he had promisede aire.

¶ They answered all, my Lord, there is in Rome,
Seuen wisest men that is in Christsendome,
Who in learning all other they preuaile,
In all wisdom, and science liberall.
They are but doubt the seade of Salomon,
For to discusse problemes or yet question,
Let a message to them be sent but mair,
Deliver them your sonne vnto the lair,
Of their counsell the Emperour was content,
For these Doctors a message soone was sent,
Under his seale, and als his owne hand-wryte,
To the Doctors he bade deliver it.
So soone as they the letters all had read,
To their voyage but tary soone them sped.
When they came to the Emperours presence,
They salust him with laud and reuerence,
On their best wise, as to them could effeare:
He said to them, ye are right welcome heere:
I aske at you, Haue ye any knowledge?

Where.

The seven Sages.

Wherefore I send to you seven, my message?
They answered him the cause no way wee know,
While that your Grace wilt vouchsafe for to shew,
Your gracious will, when yee haue shewen vs to,
That to fulfill our power wee shall doe.
To whom hee said, I thanke you Masters all,
Now vnto you mine errand shew I shall:
One sonne alone, no moe children I haue,
Nor all my time, no moe God to mee gaue,
Apparantlie hee is to bee mine aire,
Therefore I would hee were put to the lair,
To cunning men, for to haue their doctrine,
And in youth-head bee vnder Discipline:
To that effect, after my fatall debt,
Into my place with honour hee bee set,
To rule this Realme with wisdom and iustice,
Which in a Prince should euer reigne alwayes:
Therefore I would yee seven should him receiue,
And him to learne, and into guiding haue:
And yee shall bee rewarded well therefore,
So whole and sound againe yee him restore.
They thanked him all seven with reuerence,
That hee to them of his sonne gaue credence.

But the first Master called Pantillas,
Began and said, because hee oldest was.
My Lord, I shall, and please your noble Grace,
Cause your one sonne within seven yeres space,
Be as cunning in all the seven Science,
Of wit, wisdom, and all intelligence
As I, and all my marrowes that heere stands,

The seven Sages.

O any man within your bounds and lands,
So that ye will deliuer him to me:
This shall I doe in paine of honestie.

The second Master, named Lentulus,
These words said vnto the Emperour thus,
And please your grace deliuer him to me,
Within five yeres he shall haue more Cleargie,
More cunning craft in all the seven Science
For I, and all that now are in presence:
And as ye know, I haue serued your Grace,
Since I was man in all my lifes space:
And for reward I seeke no other thing,
But your one sonne to haue in gouerning.

Then spake the third, that named was Craton,
With your good Grace I sayl'd the Sea vpon,
In great perils and dangerous warfare
And of your Grace reward I seeke no more,
To be so good, you me deliuer would,
Your onely sonne in gouernance to hold,
And I promise within yeres five.

He shall be more cunning and scientiue,
For I, and all my marrowes heere about,
Vnto your Grace this shall I doe but doubt.

Then spake the fourth, his name was Malquidrack
And please your Grace my seruice for to take,
In good season, in thanks and als pleasures;
For I my selfe, and my progenitours,
Haue serued you, and yours, our liues space,
And no reward desire I of your Grace,
But to vouchsafe on me so good credence,

The seven Sages.

As for to learne your sonne perfect Science,
And for to be of cunning more persite,
For I and all my marrowes can indite.
This shall he doe within next yeares foure,
For I Science and cunning shall giue ou'r.

Then spake the fift, Iosephus was his name,
Lord, I am olde, and neuer vndefame:
On your counsell, and hath bene many yere,
Would ye leaue me your one sonne for to leere,
I shall him teach but doubt in yeres thre,
As great cunning, and als perfect Cleargie,
As I my selfe, and all my marrowes can:
For els, ye shall call me no honest man:
No more reward of your Grace I desire,
Though all my time I haue seru'd your Empire:

Then spake the sixt, was named Cleopas,
A noble man and cunning Clarke he was,
And said suchlike, as the laue said befoze:
Of your good Grace, reward I seeke no more:
But your one sonne to haue in gouerning,
Informe and teach, and into Science bring,
In cunning he shall be within two yere,
That he shall haue no perequall nor peere:
No more reward of you now aske will I,
Which your good Grace I trust will not deny.

Then said the seuenth great Master and Doctour,
Unto your Grace I will doe such pleasur,
Giue me your sonne in credence and guiding,
Within one yere I shall giue him learning,
So profoundly of the Sciences seven,

And

The seven Sages.

And of all Science vnderneath the heauen,
That in wisdom he shall haue no compare,
Vnto your Grace this shortly I declare:
For gifts of gold, nor geare I not regard,
Not for my labours I couet my reward,
But your good will, when the yere is forth gone.
The Emperour heard, and thanked them eachone:
And said, I am indebted to you all,
Unrecompens'd none of you there be shall:
But not the lesse, since I finde you so kinde,
And with good wills, haue shewen me your minde:
If I should him commit to one of you,
Then all the rest might well beleue and trove
That to that one I had more affection,
Then to the rest, which should cause dissention,
Discord, enuie, and also variance,
Which in no sort among such men should chance.
Therefore to you conjunctly all in one,
Here I commit my sonne Dioclesiane:
By a fald bairne, and eke mine onely aire,
With you to be instructed well in laire:
And him to guide in euery honest sort,
Whyles to wisdom, and whyles to game and sport,
As ye will answere each one vnto me,
In paine of credence, and of your honestie,
For be he well, euen so I thinke my self,
Doe as ye please, as now no more I tell.

These digne Doctors, the sweet language hearing
Of their good Lord: and also perceiuing
The great credence, and also the kindnes,

That

The seven Sages.

That he had shewen vnto their simplenesse:
They thanked him each one vpon their knees,
Man after man, all seven in their degrees:
Saying to him, that his Grace should be sure
Of their labours great diligence and cure.
The Emperour tooke his sonne by the hand,
And bade that he at their bidding should stand:
And in no sort that he should them offend,
Vnto the time againe he for him send,
And so at short the childe deliuered he,
Whom they receiued with all humilitie.
This being done, each one they tooke goodnight,
To Romes Court, the way they held on right.
These seven Masters their voyage passing on,
One of them said, who named was Craton,
To his fellowes, saying, my brethren deare,
Since we this child in gouerning haue here,
I thinke not best, to Romes towne that we ride,
If we list well this child gouerne and guide,
For diuerse causes and impediments,
That may occurre by inconuenients,
Tyring the childe to many sport and play,
And to neglect his studie day by day.
For when great men get knowledge what he be,
They will couet dailie his companie:
So from studie he shall be abstracted,
And we all seven with great displeasure lacked,
The other sixe said, all with one consent,
His counsell was good and conuenient,
And was said to the purpose by and by.

And

The. seven Sages.

And with good will to the same would apply,
This to eschew, I would remead were found,
For well I know within a little ground,
To builde vpon, there is a proper place,
Which to vs all were pleasure and solace.
From Romes towne but thzee miles distant,
What thing wee neede, wee misther not to want:
Let vs there make an house both rowme and squair,
Where at quiet the child may learne his lair.
Wee shall cause paint vpon the walles about,
The seven Science, with great stozies all out,
So that this Child, may see, visie and looke,
And take Doctrine, as well as in a booke,
This counsell then appleased them euerieachone,
The House was bigged, sone of Lime and Stone,
And well compleeted, as it best could effeir,
Wherein they all studied the seven yære:
Which beene out run, and all compleete together,
Then seven Masters among them did consider,
That they would examine Dioclesiane,
When that their time of the seven yeeres was gane:
If that hee was expert into Science,
Considering they had done diligence,
Antillas said, I cannot tell truelie,
How our Scoller examinde well shall bee:
Then said Craton, I shall that well deuise,
Into his bed on sleeping when hee lyes,
Under each noke of his bed wee shall lay,
An Oliue leafe, then when approaches day
If hee perceines, sone after his waking,

That

The seven Sages.

That his bed is remoued any thing,
Then we may know by our intelligence,
Hee is replete of all the seven Science,
This being done, ere in the morning,
The childe wakned before the Sunne rising,
And lifted vp his eie vnto the Sky:
And to the Kofe of the House seruentlie,
Both to and fro sharplie casting his eie,
On such fashion, before they had not scene.
The seven Masters perceiuing perfectly:
How his ingyne was raised so quickly,
They said, Wherefore looke yee so fast about?
What moues you, or what haue yee in doubt?
Shew vs in plaine, we shall cause to amend it,
If any thing hath you in heart offended,
No maruell haue, my good Masters (said hee)
For I am brought in a great fantasie:
Which hath mee made right amaz'd and als affeird,
For in my sleepe to mee I thought appearede:
That the Kofe-tree of all this whole maisoun,
Vnto the Earth was quite declined downe:
And then againe in twinckling of our eyes,
It was vplifted an hundred thousand græs:
Which put mee in a fellon fray but dout.
Then his Masters each one him round about,
Perceiued well by good Experience,
Hee was fulfilled of all the seven Science,
If hee haue dayes, and in good companie,
A man of wit, and wisdom hee shall bee:
That in the world shall none bee to him peere,

The seuen Sages.

So at this time wee leaue this young Childe here:

M O R A L I T A S.

W Ee may perceiue none Emperour,
Nor King should worke at their pleasure,
Without a good counsell:
Good counsell is the Procutour,
For to set forward good labour,
And perils doth expell.

This Emperour hee would doe nought;
While his Lords were before him brought,
And so they were right soone;
At them his counsell then hee sought,
And they him shew their minde and thought,
What was best to bee done.

In one voyce they concluded thair,
That hee should put his sonne to lair,
With cunning men of wit;
Because the counsell did it declare,
Incontentant but any mair,
Foorthwith fulfilled it.

For as the mother did prouide,
The Father on that other side,
For his sonne did foresee:
From purpose would no longer bide.
But to the Doctours in that tide,
His Sonne deliuered hee.

Though all these seuen had science scene;
Yee may perceiue that they haue beene;
Of their owne fantasie.
All casten into courage cleane,
Each one another to preuene.

The seuen Sages.

And purchase dignitie,

Each one they tooke a diuers date,
And promisd by their owne conceat,
More large nor they would doe,
Who were far by their owne estate,
For to pretend to goe the gate,
That they should not come to-

But to the Emperour tooke well in heede,
Hee thought hee would not thole the seade
Of all, and please but ane
For that hee found a good remead,
For the whole seuen without more plead,
The Child haue with them tane.

How the Emperour by counsell of his Princes and
Lords of his Empire wedded another wife.

In this meane time the Princes of honour,
And the great Lords came to the Emperour.
And said, My Lord, and please your noble Grace,
Here are wee come to shew how stands the case,
But one young Childe, wee know no moe yee haue,
And pleased God, wee would that yee had mae,
And it may stand by fatall destinie,
That your one sonne may inlake, faile and die,
As God forbid that such a thing should chance,
Yet not the lesse, wee would make purueyance,
Then were wee all of a new native king,
Made destitute aboue vs for to reigne.
Wherethrough strange folke and vncouth nations,
Might conqueis vs and all our generations.

Which

The seven Sages.

Which neuer was since this Empire began,
Conqueist, ouerthrowen with any mortall man,
Since Romulus who builded Romes towne,
Was neuer man that had Dominion
Of this Empire, but noble native Kings:
And to auoide so great and perillous things:
This is the cause we are come to your Grace,
To shew you all the matter and the case,
That such a thing is right able to be,
To put the realme swoth of such jeopardie,
We would ye toke some honest gay Lady,
Your noble Quene and bedfellow to be:
So that effect succession for to haue,
And your Empire from these dangers to saue.
The Emperour then hearing all their salues,
What such thing meant of the matter and cause,
He thanked them an hundred thousand yse,
And said, he would doe as they did deuise:
Of their counsell right well content he was,
And them inquirde to purpose for to passe:
A Lady get that was of tender age,
Both good and faire, and come of hie linage:
A cleane Virgine, and lustie to behold,
Then shall I doe the same thing that ye would,
Wed her to wife, and crowne her to my Quene,
Into this case let your wisdomes be sene,
So they departed then from the Emperour,
Deuise their Lords of wisdom and valour,
To seeke this Quene through many lands they past
While they came to a countrie at the last,

The seven Sages.

Called Cicyll, which had a noble King,
Who royally into his realme did reigne:
With great puissance, riches and honour,
Who had a maide of all fairnes the flour,
To his Daughter of fourteene yeres of age,
Poble, courteous, and pleasant of visage:
With all vertue that in women might be,
And wise at will, also apparantly,
Whom they desire at this good roble King,
In marriage to the Emperour bzing,
And make her Quene of all the whole Empire:
This noble King granted to their desire,
The Lords of Counsell and Ambassadors:
Were then dispatched with pleasure and honours.
And brought with them this noble gay Ladie,
Which their young Quene, & als Emprice should be,
They hee'd bp sayles with all their cleane courage:
With manly might came forward their voyage:
Upon the sea they suffered great perrell,
In home-comming, by soze stozme and travell:
Waltering with wind outthzough the muddy waues
The Bozeall blasts so boldly on them blowes,
That they were faine and joyfull at the last,
To saue their liues, for to cut their maine mast:
Cut their Cables, and ouer bozd cast their geare,
All of their liues, they stood into such feare,
Some of them said, it was a most shrewd signe,
Of a good lucke, such a Quene home to bzing,
Wherethzough they were all in point for to tine,
And wist not what would be the latter fine.

Some

The seuen Seges.

Some said againe, all was come for the best,
She was witelesse, howbeit storme them opprest,
So eachone said, as they that time best thought,
So at due time to their owne cost was brought,
As sone they came vnto their kindly coast,
Downe threw their sailes, and their good ships lost,
Then wold sone come vnto the Emperour,
That all the Lords were landed with pleasure,
And with them brought a noble young Ladie,
Which to the King his wedded wife should be.
The Emprour caus'd proclame thzogh Romes towne
That euerie Lord, Knight, Marques, and Baroun,
In best array to make them all readie,
With faire fashion to meete that young Ladie,
Which but delay was done with diligence:
And so they gaue this Ladie all presence,
In rich array as they could best deuise,
With all triumph, and into their best wise,
To their citie they did her all conuoy,
With all gladnes, mirth, melodie and joy.
And when she came vnto this noble towne,
The bells did ring with honour and renoune,
The clothes of gold was spred thzough all the ströete
When she lighted to goe vpon her fete.
The rich badkins, the costlie beluet webbes,
The bzodered woꝝks, and the rich royall robes,
Which on the staires were spred so high on hie,
It was pleasure to any man to see:
With all other woꝝldes vaine fantasie,
What mans bzaine and ingine could deuise,

The seven Sages.

And so at last came in the Emperour,
With his great Lords of riches and honour,
Gave his Lady his person in presence,
With all triumph, renowne and reuerence,
And her embrac'd, as could him well effer,
And said, Lady, ye are right welcome here.
Then the great joy that in the citie was,
My weake ingine can no wise well compasse.
So on the morne when that the day was light,
Unto the Church they brought this Lady bright,
With all triumph, great mirth and melodie,
With mens wit that could deuised be.
Conuoyed with Kings, noble Princes and Lords,
As at such times agræes well and accords.
Then followed her the noble Emperour,
With all his Lords that were of great valour,
Stout men of arms, into their chieftest wædes,
Ryding at right vpon their stalward stædes.
Als with him came diuers great Kings and Knights
Dukes, Barons, Carles, and many worthy wights,
With trumpet, shalme, drum, swash, and clarioun,
Harpe, Lute, Organe, cymbale and cymphioun:
Making their mirth all into good order,
Heralds of Armes, into their coat armour,
Past on before as it was most seemely,
In their owne state, conforme to their degré,
While they come to the royall church of Rome,
Which was the head of Churches in Christendome,
There lighted they with mirth and merines,
For to compleate the band of holinesse,

That

The "leuen" Sages.

That God deuise betwixt woman and man,
When hee this world first creat and began.
Of that Citie the great Bishop was there,
With all his Clarkes of great wisdom and lair,
This band being compleet in Gods Name,
With mirth and joy past to the Pallace hame:
Where there was made banket with melodie,
With alkin mirth and pleasant menstrallie,
While that night came, the each man thought it best
To quiet passe, and take the nights rest.
So this Ladie but any tarying,
Shee past to bed with her husband the King,
And so obtain'd the great fauour and loue
Of her good Lord, that it could not remoue,
And of her loue hee tooke so great delite,
That the other Queene hee had forgote her quite,
And all his loue was cast on this new Queene,
As hee before had neuer married beenc:
Yet not the lesse all the dayes of their liue,
God thoght he would all bairnes from them depriue.
So them betwixt they no succession had,
Which made this Queene right sorrowfull and sad,
Saying, Husband, one thing I you require,
If yee would grant, right hartlie I desire:
Because long time this Emprice did persauce.
No kinde of Childe shee was able to haue:
Shee turnde her sailes vnto another wind:
Where that shee might some subtilnesse cause finde
Into her bed where that shee was lyand,
In a morning with her spous and husband,

The seuen Sages.

Shee saith, My Lord, and please your noble Grace,
Betwixt vs two, is chanc'd an heauie case.
That wee no way can get succession,
Which sads mine heart, and does mee great passion,
But would your Grace one thing vnto mee grant,
Betwixt vs two, a child wee should not want.
Quoth hee, that thing deuise how that yee can,
For that exceeds the wit of any man,
For to get haires, since God will not them grant
Then force it is, both yee and I them want.
Shee said, My Lord, it is vnto mee showane,
Yee haue a Sonne which is not to mee knowne,
With seuen Masters most wisest vpon ground,
And hee himselte none wiser can bee found,
Would yee him bring to Court in my presence,
I should doe all deuour and diligence;
Him to intreate into so good fashion:
That all should say out throught great Romes town,
Not onelie said, but also should bee sworne,
That hee were of mine owne two sides borne:
And since so is that I cannot conceiue,
Onely your sonne, as mine owne I would haue.
My Lord, this is the asking I require:
Beseeching you to fulfill my desire,
Yet not the lesse her minde was and her thought,
In subtiltie, and all with malice wrought,
Imagining daylie the Childs dead,
Though his father tooke not such thing in head:
Hee said, Ladie, that will I not deny,
What euer yee aske, enamoured so am I.

Into

The seven Sages.

Into your loue, that force compelles mee,
What will yee aske, denide it shall not bee:
Therefore, since I the secrets of mine heart,
Shewes to you plaine, to mee keepe yee your part:
As for my sonne, it is long time by-past,
And diuerse yeeres, since that I saw him last,
Yet not the lesse, to accomplish your will,
I shall with speede a message send him till:
And cause him come, and als his Masters all,
What hee can doe, both heare and see yee shall,
For I beleue hee hath beene diligent,
In his studie, and in Science frequent.
And for to learne wit, knowledge and wisdom, e,
That after mee hee may guide his kingdome.
Shee said, Lord, that it be so, God grant,
For that same cause I would no wise him want:
But if shee said these wordes with her heart,
Yee will perceiue by proces afterward.
The Emperour sone caus'd make a Distine,
The messenger hee was direct beline,
Into greit haste and expedition,
Unto the seven great Masters of renown,
Incontinent vnder the paine of dead,
And no lesse paine nor wanting of their head,
Should bring his sonne to him at Whitsonday,
All excuses being cleane put away.
The Messenger with speed despatched was,
To the Doctors the hie gate can hee passe,
And the writting deliuered sone hath hee
Unto the seven Doctors of dignitie

Who

The seven Sages.
Who it receiv'd with all obedience,
Humilitie, honour and reuerence.

MORALITAS.

IT is a plague perilous and a great dispaire,
A Realme to bee destitute of a native aire:
Where kinde Captaines holds Courts, no cause is of care,
The Common-wealth increaseth more and more.
By the contrare againe:
Vnkindlie Captaines ouerthrawes,
And Common-wealth downe drawes,
And leades not the olde lawes,
But contrare workes plaine.

This was the most motiue, cause and the quarrell
That causde these Princes compeare, to show all perill,
The great danger and doubt, and the cause haile,
Both for Common-wealth, and crown if aires chances fail
There was but onely one:
Therefore this matter they meane,
To cause him take a Queene,
If this aire were gone.

And so with speed but plie to counsell applyit,
Cause it was the Common-well, hee durst not deny it,
But yet his first Queenes desire in some part past by it,
That to the Court the child broght, where he was fore in-
The Emperour not knew, (uyit,
Yee know of old this true tale,
Nice is the Nightingale,
The Emperour gaue credence haile,
And neuer word trew,

When Wemen speakes fairest, they are most falle found
They

The seven Sages.

They make sweet liquor swim aboue, & gal is at the ground
They show them like a turtle doue, and bites as a hound.
The Emperour was deceiued sore, as soone was after found,
They were ay, and shall be,
So inquisitiue both night and day,
The Emperour could no wise say nay:
But men should not trow what they say,
So oft because they lie.

How the seven Masters after the sight of the Em-
perours letters, would see the course of the
Firmament, and Planets, whether
it was good to obey his
Command or not.

As soone as these seven Masters had ou'rsene
The Emperours write, and vnderstood it cleane,
On the next night all seven with one consent,
Wast to espy the starres and firmament,
To take journey, if it was prosperous,
Or contrare way, if it was dangerous,
For to fulfill the Emperours command:
Or if they durst, the samin to gainstand.
Anone they spie into the firmament,
A stormie starre which troubled their intent:
Perceiuing well by the starre, if that they
Their journey tooke, and rode that samin day,
To them affixt by the Emperours command,
The child but doubt in great perill shoulde stand.
For the first word that he spake in p'sence
Of his father in open audience,
Shoulde be the cause of his most shamefull deade:

This

The seven Sages.

This to eschew they could find no remead,
Whereof they were all sad and wonder soze,
And wist not well to trauell or to tary,
Another starre then they beheld also,
Shewing if they to the king would not go,
And keepe the day which was affixt them to,
To want their heades there was no more ado.
One of them said, where two evils doe appeare,
Let vs that take, wherein lyes least danger,
It is better, surely I say for me,
For this Empire that we all seven should die,
And other seven such like as we are all,
Or this young man should suffer any thzall:
Wherefore let vs all seven with one intent,
Our owne persons to the Emperour present,
And let the child at home alone remaine,
To see if we tary, or comes againe:
And so they were all seven right sorrowfow,
Pansing alwayes what meane, fashion, or how,
They might eschew this inconuenient,
So this young man came downe incontinent:
From his chamber where he was studying,
His seven Masters he there found all sitting,
Right sorrowfull, and sad in countenance,
He them inquirde what was the cause and chance
Of their sadnes: they said thus standes the case,
We all beled to haue had of you solace,
Blythnes and joy, and also good reward,
But now Fortune hath bene to you so hard,
That all such thing to great mishap will turne:
Wherefore

The seven Sages.

Wherefore we haue all great cause for to moune,
For all our joy and our felicity,
As like to turne to great aduersity.

He said, Masters, I pray you to me shew,
How the case stand' th, yet ye will let me know.

They said, the cause that we can shew to you,
Into the selfe is very sorrowfou:

For your father, the Emperour and King,
Vnto vs seven hath sent a sharpe writing,
Commanding vs withoutten tarying,

On paine of liues, that we you to him bring,
Incontinent at the next Pentecoste,

These his writings he hath sent at the Poste,
To what effect, we know not his intent,

But we all seven haue spied the firmament,
The Planets eke, and also the starres cleare,

And we can see none other thing appeare,
But hastely without any remead,

If ye speake once, ye shall thole suddaine dead,
If we delay, and bring you not him till,

Our death is dight, and in your fathers will.

The child answer'd againe right humbly,

I soze repent that such a thing shoulde be:

Can ye not finde in that case no remead,

But either I or ye to suffer dead?

Yet must I passe and all the starres espy,

If I can finde any remead thereby,

That may put off that deadly dolent houre,

And satisfie my father the Emperour,

Incontinent he vikes ouer his bookes,

Then

The seven Sages.

Then after that vnto the starres he lookes,
Among the rest a proper starre he saw,
That was right cleare, perfect and wonder small:
Whereby right well considered he the case,
If that he could abstaine seven daies space
From all speaking, and hold himselfe as dum,
All such perill he cleanly should ouercome,
And all their liues in no perill should be,
Which starre he let all his seven Masters see:
And said, Masters, behold and well persaue,
If I my selfe as dum man may me haue,
Seven dayes but speach, and then on the eight day,
All the perill I shall auoide alway:
And ye are seven of all the world most wise:
I thinke it is but a small enterprise,
Eachone of you to saue my life one day:
When that is done, then some thing I shall say,
That ye and I from all perill shall be.
The Masters seven concluded perfectly,
All that he said was wonder iust and true,
For by the starre the samin well they knew,
And rendered thanks to the power diuine,
That their scholler had so perfect ingine,
Of cleare cunning, such a starre to consider,
Whereby that they should be safe altogidder,
And out of doubt, and all danger of dead,
Seven dayes put by, himselfe to find remead,
The first Master, Pantillas was his name,
Said that he should vnder the paine of shame,
For the first day before the King to stand,

The seven Sages.

To saue his life peartlie hee tooke on hand,
Quoth Lentullus, which was the next Doctour,
I take on hand your life for to succour:
The second day: and so said all the rest,
Their day about so long as seven did last,
This being said, all seven with one consent,
They clade this childe in new abilement,
In golden Clothes, as esseird his estate,
Then lape on horse, and forward made the gate,
To Romes towne with all the speed they had.
For to obey as the Emperour them bade.

M O R A L I T A S.

IT were well done ere wee our voyage tooke,
Or yet journey, either be sea or land,
Vpon the starres and firmament to looke,
If that voyage with godlinesse do stand,
And in no sort that it brake the command,
Of God, also, nor doe him none offence,
The starres I meane to bee mans conscience.

As these Doctors ere they to journey went,
The firmament they would first passe and spy,
Where they perceiu'd a great impediment,
By diuers stars appearing in the sky,
For to remaine, shew them good cause and why,
The Kings precept aliterly to gainstand:
Yet some reliefe the Child himselfe hee fand.

God him granted, and such grace to him gaue,
To finde a way that they all safe might bee,
By his Masters a proper star persauce,
Which all the seven could not perceiue nor see,
Whereby they might their journey passe safely,

Con.

The seuen Sages.

Conditionally, so that hee could bee dume,
Vnto the space, seuen dayes were gone and come.

Wherefore wee all may bee right wonder sure,
The grace of God to no man is obstant:
As to the rich, euen likewise to the poore,
As to the olde, euen so to the infant.
His treasure is to all so abundant,
So simply giuen, so liberall and so free,
To them it seekes with all humilitie.

As the Gryphon, and als the great Goshalke,
Is at all time of wing most wonder wight,
Vnto their Prey no kind of birde will balke:
Yet then the Sparhauke is as swift of flight,
As the Gryphon, and as sharpe of her sight:
Will catch as well such birds as she hath vse:
As the Gryphon will catch to him a goose.

Euen so a Page, or yet a young Prentice,
When they are but lately put to the warke,
By quicke ingyne, studie and good seruice.
Hee may preuaile his Master at the marke:
Euen so did this young man, and cunning Clarke,
Perceiued a Starre which his Masters ouersaw,
Howbeit they were longer learnde in the Law.

It is oft seene a sober simple man,
To a great man counsellor may bee,
By Gods grace perchance as well hee can,
Giue good counsell, as they of greater gree,
Who are vplisted into authoritie:
For why? the Bee that is right weake of wing,
Home to her Hyue, sweete hony shee will bring.

Brevis

The seuen sages.

*Brevis in volatilibus est apus, & initium dulcoris,
huius fructus illius. Eccles. 12.*

Howe the Emperour rode to meete his sonne,
comming from the studie, with great
pompe and pride.

AND so as they had entred into voyage,
The postes ran with all hastie message
To Romes towne, and told the Emperour,
That his one sonne, with all haste and labour,
Was comming home, on horse the ready way,
His fathers will and precepts to obey.
Then his father incontinent causede call
His great Princes, and other Lords all,
And bade them bee in readinesse eachone,
Hee would goe meet his sonne Dioclesiane.
The seuen Masters perfectly knowing,
The Emperour with his Court was cumming,
Unto the Child, all in one voyce they said,
Wee thinke it best some danger to auoide,
That wee all seuen passe into the citie,
And yee forward passe with yout companie,
In the meane time, that wee may all provide
Some helpe, that may put by this cursed tide:
And wee shall doe all that wee can or may,
For your supplie, each one to keepe one day.
The Child answerde, as yee will, pleaseth mee,
Remember yet on my necessitie,
In great danger I wote that I will stand:
Therefore thinke on what yee haue tane in hand.

The seven Sages.

They tooke their leaue at him sorrowfullie;
Then all they rode toward Romes Citie,
So forward came Dioclesiane ryding,
And lookes on far, saw his father comming:
And as they met, off his Horse lighted downe,
To his father hee made him readie bolwne,
Kneeling on knee withall obedience,
Then his ffather with loue and reuerence,
About the necke oftymes hee tooke and kist,
That hee was dumbe his ffather yet not wist.
Mine owne deare sonne, yee are welcome hee said,
Of your welfare I am right wonder glad,
How is it with you, I pray you, let mee knowe:
For it is long afoze since I you saw.
Then this young man full right man-like and meeke
Bow'd down his head, and nothing would he speak,
Therefore his ffather marueiled gretumly,
That hee againe not answered instantly,
Yet hee compass into his minde againe,
By his Masters that hee was so constrainde,
And commanded, that hee should speake nothing,
Hee on Horse-backe, by any way riding,
So home they came out thzough the great Citie,
Of Romes towne with great solemnitie.
While they came to the Emperours palice
Where that there was many antique deuise,
And off their Horse with speed they lighted downe,
With great triumph, honour, and als renowne,
The ffather led his Sonne in by the hand
Into the Hall, where many were bydand,

And

The seven Sages.

And set him downe beside him at the dease,
The Heraulds bade soone silence all, and cease.
Then sonne, hee said, now yee will speake to mee;
Your seven Masters, how doe they, tell let see,
How does your selfe: for it is long agoe,
Sinces I you saw, the suth it is even so.
Hee are welcome to mee with heart and minde.
So then the Childe his head hee so inclinde:
As hee would say, I thanke you Father deare,
What euer he thoght there was no mā might heare
Whereat his Father marueil'd gretumly,
And in a part hee looked earnestlie,
And said, Tell mee withoutten many salues,
That yee speake not the maner and the cause,
Hee answered not, but bowed downe his head,
The Emperour saw that there was no remeade:
Hee pan' so in minde, of his sonne not content,
So the Envyce gotte word incontinent,
Whereof shee was wonder joyous and glaid,
To her Ladies with merie minde shee said:
Now will I goe Dioclesiane to see:
Wherefore that yee my best cloathing bring mee;
And so anone shee went downe to the haw,
Where that full soone Dioclesiane shee saw,
Upon the dease beside the Childe sate downe,
As this your soone, my Lord shuld brook you crowne
And hath beene teach'd by all the seven Doctors;
Hee is to mee welcome with all favours:
Hee is my sonne, the Emperour said againe,
But hee speaks not, whereof I am not faine,

The seuen Sages.

I know nothing how it is fallen by chance,
By deuillrie, or by Gods ordinance:
But all the time to me since he is come,
I heare nothing, but alwayes he is dum.
She said, my Lord, deliuer him to me,
If euer he spake, that ye shall heare and see,
I shall him cause with words fair and meeke,
That I doubt not but he will to me speake.
The King said, goe away with her and rise,
The child he rose on his most humble wise,
Inclining low with all obedience,
To his father rendring good reuerence,
To the chamber with the Emprice he went,
But I beleue, it please not his intent.

MORALITAS.

THat it is written well we know,
Into the booke of Exodie:
When God to Moses gaue the Law,
On Mount Sinai that hill so hie,
Into that booke there finde may we,
Amongst the ten Commandements,
That we obedient should be.
And hold in honour our parents.

So did this child when that he saw,
His father by the way cumand,
Downe off his horse he lighted low,
On his knees rooke him by the hand:
Als when his father gaue command,
Him for to speake, he bow'd his head,
With humble heart to him meanand,
I dare not speake for feare of dead.

Such

The seven Sages.

Such thing his father no wise kend,
But when the Queene came in presence,
Incontinent he bade him wend:
With her to chamber, and goe hence,
The child with all obedience,
Past at commaud, and howbeit he knew
That it would cause a great offence,
Knew wel that race that he would rew.

Euen so we should be all and one,
To our parents obedient,
And if our owne be dead and gone,
The principall is remanent,
That is our Father al-potent,
He feedes vs with his holy hand:
Then let vs set our whole intent,
On our best way keepe his Command,

How the Emprice led *Dioclesiane* to her cham:
ber, for to make merinesse, which ap-
pearingly he withstood.

The Emprice then some Ladies calde her till,
Saying, this is mine vtter minde and will:
That ye prepare my chamber, and my bed,
With silke badkins that it be well ou'rspred,
And all the house ou'rspred with tapestrie.
They said, Madame, as ye bid, so shall be.
Then the Emprice toke *Dioclesiane*.
By the right hand, and to the chamber is gone,
And causde anoide all the chambers anone,
None stay'd therein, but they two them alone.

She

The seven Sages.

Shee thought it best, none other there should bide,
And set him downe befoze her owne bide side,
And said to him these words in a part,
O best beloued Dioclesiane mine heart,
Ofttime I haue heard speake of your beautie,
Your wit, wisdom, and your great courtesie,
Your great vertue ere euer I you saw:
I couet much you both to see and know,
I am right glad, my swete Dioclesiane,
That wee two now are so secret alane.
I would haue giuen within this yeare ago.
Ten thousand pound for to haue had it so.
And I am glad that now I may beholde,
The samine thing that mine heart alwayes would,
And I haue causde your father for to send,
To that intent, and for that finall end:
That I may haue of your bodie solace,
And now since wee are here in secret place,
For without fault I say to you plainlie,
I haue kepted my cleane Virginitie
To you truelie, vnto this present houre,
Not withstanding your father the Emperour,
Hath married me, yet would I not consent,
In that behalfe, to fulfill his intent.
But at all times haue waited vpon you,
Wherefore of mee yee take your pleasure now,
And speake to mee, and let vs goe to bedde,
Since I my selfe now thereto haue you led.
What euer thee said, what euer thee did or wrought
For all her talke, one word hee answer'd nought.

Shee

The seven Sages.

Shee seeing that, to him shee said againe,
O my sweet heart, and good Dioclesiane,
I sweare you here by Peter and by Paul,
In your keeping you haue my life and saul,
What is the cause, to mee yee will not speake?
Shew mee of loue some token I beseeke:
For as yee know I am a young Ladie,
And to performe your will, am here readie.
So in her Armers diuerse times shee him hint,
Him to haue kist, to his mouth made a mint,
He turn'd his head, and would not thole her kisse,
In her own minde (quoth shee) what thing is this?
And to this man I profer my body,
And by no way hee will consent to mee.
Dioclesiane, mine onelie loue shee said,
With that my loue so firme is on you laid,
Why doe yee this, to mee to bee vnkinde,
Knowing right well, ye haue mine heart and mind,
And there is none that may perceine or see,
What there is done into this House but wee.
Therefore grant mee the thing that I you craue,
And yee therefore my maidenhead to haue.
Hee wyped his face away, and his visage:
For by no way hee liked her language.
Perceiuing then that shee could not obtaine,
His loue nor fauour, but it denyed cleane,
Shee said, my loue and swæte Dioclesiane,
Behold my paps, behold my white breast bane,
Which here I put in your will and pleasure,
And cleane forsake your father the Emperour,

The seuen Sages.

For why : hee is both feeble, weake and olde,
Leane of body, and als of nature colde,
In his youth-head so valiant hee hath bene,
That now in age hee is consumed cleane,
That hee scarcely may stand vpon his feet:
Wherefore to mee noz such, hee is not meete;
At your pleasure therefore my body take.
Hee seeing this, his head hee turned backe,
That by no signe, noz other countenance,
Into no sort hee would doe her pleasance,
But in so far as hee could him remoue.
Shee might perceiue that shee wanted his loue.
Quoth shee againe, if it pleases you nought,
To speake to mee, noz yet shew mee your thought,
As may perchance bee done for some good why,
Into that case excuse you well will I:
Yet not the lesse. I would yee did indite,
Vpon Paper, and your minde to mee write,
Yee please not speake, take there paper and inke,
Beseeching you to write mee what yee thinke:
If afterward your loue I may obtaine,
In secret wise, that none wote what wee meane:
So the paper and inke hee did receiue,
And write as after heere yee may perceiue.

O Lady faire, I pray God me defend,
From such mischance as I see you intend:
If I defile my fathers owne Orchard,
My fathers ire I get for my reward,
Nor I wote not what fruit thereof shall spring,
And als right well I know another thing,

That

The seven Sages.

That Gods wrath but faile shall fall on mee,
Therefore at short let all such folly be:
Prouok me not no further hitherto,
For I will shew the matter, if ye do.

As soone as shee the Cedul had outread,
Under her feete incontinent it tread:
And then againe with her teeth shee it reane,
Whereof the text, that no man should perceiue.
All her head-geare shee did cast on the flure,
Kane downe her clothes, and all her rich bestoure,
Kane downe her haire, and skarted her visage:
While blood ranne downe ouer all her personage:
That all might heare, shee cride with a loude voyce.
Hy, helpe for shame or I my selfe will losse,
This rude Ribald would rauish mee with shame,
Perceiue this Childe now, if hee serues blame?
Was neuer woman since first the world began,
So cruelly drest, with an vnfaithfull man:
That I lipned none harme should to mee done,
O yee my Lords, come heere, and helpe mee soone.

M O R A L I T A S.

NOW by this tale yee may perceiue,
How many wayes that Women haue,
At all times for to deceiue an innocent,
Into her net while shee him get, to her intent,
While flattering words both false and faire.
Such to rehearse would file the aire,
For shame nor sin they will not spare, their minde to show
Shame is past the shed of their haire, as well wee know.

To

The seven sages.

To tempt this man was all her minde,
And cause him to foule sinne bee inclinde,
Hee would not speake, but with a synd he wold forsak her,
Shee was the deuils wonder kynde, the foule ill take her.

Shee lightlied her owne Lord and king,
With great deceit, and false taking,
Incontinent the childe to bring to a mischiese:
Fy traitor, that thought such a thing, fy common thiefe.

Paper and inke shee till him gaue,
Though hee was dumbe that shee might haue,
His vtter minde, and to perceiue what would hee do:
When shee it read, with feete it tread: now fy, quoth she.

When that shee saw shee could not speed,
Shee raue her clothes into screide,
With skarting causde her face to bleed in great despite,
Fy, trompou, that did such a deed, God will thee quite.

When she had all reauen downe her face,
Shee cryde oftimes full loud alace,
Is there none helpe in all this place, nor no remead?
This traitor strong go soone cause hang, while he be dead.

Hee would heere in great villanie,
Contrare my will desorced mee,
As yee may all perceiue and see, my bloody face
Beares witnes well if such thing bee into this case.

Yee may perceiue shee had no shame,
To cause her selfe get such defame,
Likewise an innocent bure blame, that was so cleane,
That tooke no cure to be a whore and she a Queene.

Then into euill so well expert,
So falsely could the tale peruert,

Wich

The seuen Sages.

Which was well known soone after ward, as ye shall heare
What was both Queene & childes part shalbe made clear.

O dolie Dragon, and doubtfull Den,
O glowring, greedie and gaping Glen,
O filthie flsh fostered in fen, with great offence:
O Cocatrice that will not know thine owne conscience,

O vile viper most venomous,
O subtile serpent sulphureous:
O hideous pit pestiferous: now this I say thee,
O double Deuill most dangerous: God saue me from thee.

In malice thou art so frequent,
So many evils thou can inuent,
So vicious and so vehement, ay proud to euill:
Thou would run to get thine intent, quicke to the deuill.

Fy, on thee foule, flame fire so fell,
Fy on thee, hideous hound of hell.
From thee very springing Well that ay was broken:
That cares not to condemne thy sell, thy lust to flockin.

Fy on thy lust insatiable,
Fy on thy mirth most miserable,
Fy on thy loue most lamentable full of dispite,
Your chance is ay so changeable: cleane I you quite,

Sith I you see so iuconstant,
All vertues mee thinke yee want:
But into vice right abundant, yee are profest:
And ay to run to shame and sinne, you thinke it best,

Since yee are giuen to your pleasure,
Not regarding your owne honour,
How shall men haue to you fauour, therefore I quite you,
Ye are not worth, to be set foorth: the deuill bedryte you.

The seven Sages.

To good women not this I say,
It is their part both night and day
As ye haue heard before me say, with them to chide,
To this good women will not say nay, no time nor tide,

Therefore I pray you me excuse,
For euill women I will not ruse,
Their owne honour so they abuse: in euey sort
Herefore their companie I refuse, I say at short.

How the Emprice complained to the Empe-
rour of the shame done to her by
his sonne *Dioclesiane*.

THe Emperour with his Lords in the hall,
Heard the loud shout, and sozie piteous call,
Of the Empryce, all hastely they forth ran,
Many great Lord, Knight, and Gentleman.
The Emperour came first where was the Quene,
And said, Madame, what haue ye heard oꝝ sene,
To doe you noy, anguish oꝝ displeasure?
O fy she said, here is a great traitour,
He call your sonne, but your sonne is he nought,
Had he bene yours, such thing he had not wrought.
I wote it was neuer heard of befoꝛne,
In all this world since any man was boꝛne,
What such a knaue so hie thing should presume,
As to defile the great Empryce of Rome:
Therefore, my Lord, since ye are Emperour,
This matter most tends to your great dishonour,
Correct ye not such thing, and make remead,
I care no thing howe sone that I be dead,

The seven Sages.

For good causes to chamber I him led,
Then like a knave he would defile my bed,
I cherish him with words of great comfort,
To speake to me I did him oft exhort:
On fowle bawdrie his minde was onely set,
Whome he saw his will he could not get,
At his pleasure he made him me deforce
Contrare my will, and so hath rent my corse,
With effusion of blood all abundant,
And beleaving none other thing instant,
But hastie dead, were not I gaue a shout,
Consider well, if I stood then in doubt.
Ye may perceiue by mine abillement,
The trueth hereof, how that he hath it rent,
The shame and sinne of this harlot to see,
Each man may know how he hath done to me.
Therefore, my Lord, as I haue said before,
If you desire, ye would cause to restore,
My great honour, and my worship againe:
That this Ribald, false Dioclesiane,
Should from me rent forcely against my will,
Or els your bed I shall neuer come intill.
When that the King this matter heard and saw,
He was inflamde with cruell ire and gaw,
Malice, woodnes, and great melancholie,
Was no remead but that his sonne should die:
Called sergeants, and gaue them strait command,
On a gallous they should him hang fra hand.
Then said the Lords that stood the Emperour neare
And please your grace some of our words to heare.

Lord

The seven Sages.

Lord, as yee know, yee haue no sonnes but one,
Wherefore wee all haue great cause to make mone,
And if yee had, wee thinke all verilie,
Your pleasant sonne were able for to die:
But not the lesse, with so hastie intent:
Wee thinke not best, wee say with one consent,
Your onelie sonne that yee so sone put downe,
Without ordour of Law or prouision.
The law is made to punish trespassers:
All giuen to euill, and mischant frangressers:
And if so bee that hee bee found the same:
Then by order let the law him condemne:
That no man say, that the great Emperour,
His onelie sonne in madnes and furour,
Without the law hath put his sonne to dead.
Please your Grace to this matter take heede:
The Emperour to such words gaue audience,
And said, my Lords, of mee yee haue credence,
Within this Realme to leade iustice and law:
Wherefore I will consent well to your saw,
And als I thinke it right expedient,
Hee bee condemn'd in a plaine judgement
When command was to put him in prison,
There to remaine without any ransoun,
Vnto the time that iustice Court should stand,
Then foure saylers receiued him fra hand,
In deepe prison right sharply him inclos'd.
Wherein before the Child was neuer vs'd,
Now let him sit, God couer him of care:
Of the Emprice let vs speake furthermore,

Who

The feuen Sages.

Who perseuer'd in malice and great pze;
Againe this child as any burning fire.
As soone as shee had gotten true knowledge,
That this young man Childe was put in prisonage;
Not put to dead so suddainlie as shee wold,
Shee cried, shouted, and mourned manifold,
That all the palace shee cau'd bee all on steele,
It was great paine her for to see and heare:
Then her Ladies to her Chamber thought best,
Her to conuoy, therein for to take rest.
When night was come, the King to Chamber past,
And found his Queene mourning and weeping fast:
Wringing her hands, sobbing and sighing sair,
The King noy'd to see her make such care.
To whom hee said, O my deare Ladie gent,
What is the cause that yee so soze lament?
Shee said My Lord, yee know not all my case:
How your curst sonne hath made bloody my face,
And would mee put to vtter dispelasure,
Where not your selfe and other made succour?
Hee commanded him to bee hang'd fra hand,
Yet not the lesse on life hee is liuand,
For your command is not obey'd at all,
For yet my shame no way is made to fall.
Wherefore my Lord, I thinke that yee stand alw,
Upon your sonne to lead Justice and Law.
Then to the Queene the Emperour can say,
Madame so soone the morne as it is day,
All your desire to fulfill and intent,
Hee shall but doubt thole justice and judgement.

Quoth

The seuen Sages.

Queth shee, My Lord, shall hee yet liue so lang,
Quoth hee, Madame, let this one night ou'rgang,
Then might such chance on you come hastelle,
As on an Burgesse came of this Citie,
As it was showne the trueth vnto my sell,
Quoth hee, Madame, I pray you that to tell,
At your pleasure, quoth shee it shall be done,
So her sermon on this wise began sone.

M O R A L I T A S.

Yee see this Queene by wayes wrong,
Willing put downe this proper childe,
By curst conceat and leasing strong:
To death him to conuict and file.
And als her King perswade, to trow all that shee said,
With many wrinke, false way and wile.
But yet shee was set by her stile, by good counsell hee had.

Which causde him to prolong the time,
By counsell vnto the morne,
Where they best could tarie out the crime,
And clenge the chaffe out from the corne;
It is good to put by an euill houre, say I,
Ere an innocent be forlorne:
And hee of so great linage borne, this is the cause and why.

For if this Queene had gotten her will,
The King had repented it sore
Without counsell or good skill,
For to destroy his sonne and aire,
Which great pittie had beene, while the trueth had beene
A vengeance on her euermaire, (seene
This child that caried in such care, & curst be such a Quen
When

The seven Sages.

Whan thou young man comes to good age,
If any time it chanceth thee,
By gift of God, wit and knowledge,
A chosen Iudge then for to bee,
If any fault be done, caule to correct it soone,
But first that thou both heare and see
The talking of the next partie, then thou thy wit adjoyne.

If there occure cause or quarrell,
Be not too swift to giue sentence;
For therein stands right great perrell
Doubt and danger with negligence,
Be the matter obscure, then thou should be right sure,
By witnesse and experience,
Let each one vse theit due defence, euen to rich as poore.

See thou vse aye good counsell,
Of that be sicker at thy side;
And so lightly thou shalt not faile,
What euer chance for to betide,
Good counsell is the ground, where faithfulness is found,
It canperceiue and als prouide,
And from all perrill for to guide, within a little stound.

For if thou hastily pronounce,
Sentence too soone to rich or poore,
The same no wise thou may renounce;
Nor in no sort againe recure,
Withoutten lacke and shame, dishonour and defame:
Therefore thou should be wonder sure,
That thou to no man doe injure, or els thou seruest blame.

Now to you Iudges I will say,
Eschew from wrath and great fauour:
Let mercie mease your minde alway,
Let Reason rule your great rancour,

The seven Sages.

In no point be partiall, your ballance beare equall,
Then doe ye God a good pleasure,
And to your selfe purchase honour, and wins good of all:

To know what the Emperour, the Emprice,
and the young child, and the seven
Doctours doe signifie.

ERe we proceed yet furthermare,
Of this matter some thing will I shaw,
What each thing meanes for to declare,
The matter better ye will know,
This Emperour that leades the Law,
Hee signifies a mans person,
That walters betwixt wind and waue,
Into this world ay vp and downe.

His Sonne betokens the soule of man,
Which in the corps is ay inclosde:
The Emprice signifies Sathan
Who ever open malice musde,
The seven Doctours are seven vertues,
Fighting contrare seven deadly synnes:
Which that the sillie soule persues,
When destruction it begins.

The seven dayes this child is dumbe,
Of mans life they are the space:
For in this world fra he first come,
He neuer hath perfect solace:

While

The seven sages.

While that God take him in his grace,
And forget all this worldly lust
Then speaks he to God face to face,
When that the Deuill he hath vanquesh.

Euen so is of this Emprice tale.
Told for to tempt the Emperour,
Trowing perfectly to preuaile:
And of this child to be victour,
Tells on this tale for his pleasure:
Of which the Emperour was content,
As yce shall heare, good auditour,
Therefore to purpose let vs went.

The first tale of the Emprice, is of the good tree
that grew in the Burges garden, and for
the impe that grew beside it,
caused cut the great tree.

In Romes towne remained a rich Burges,
Which had at wealth all mirth and merinesse,
With faire biggings which were both broad and hie
With gay gardens that were pleasant to see,
Of euery flowre he had therein a part,
That was to get about in euery airt.
To tell their names I need not now take time,
Few was such like so pleasant in all Rome,
In this garden there grew a noble tree,
Which euery yeere brought forth fruit good plentie,
Then by all this the fruit that on it grew,

The seven Sages.

Was so done sweete, and of so great vertue,
What man that had any soze maladie,
As is leper, excesse or poplecie:
So soone as hee of this fruite got a taste,
Of all sicknesse hee would be whole in haste,
And so it chanc'd vpon an holy day.
This Burgesse went to his Garden, to say
His orisons, and beholding this tree,
A gay young Impe behinde it quietly
Hee saw growing, which was proper and faire,
Incontinent hee called the Gardener.
Hee said, Good friend see yee bee wonder sure,
And of this Impe dayly that yee take cure:
For I belieue to haue a better tree,
Of that young plant, and better be such thre,
For is the olde which I cannot aduance,
That pith inlakes, sap, sapour and substance:
Howbeit this tree bee far growne it abone:
The Gardener said, Master, it shall bee done.
Within few dayes to shew thee for certaine,
To see this plaint the Burges came againe,
Which as hee thought, was not so halfe plesand,
As it was when the first day hee it fand.
To the Gardener hee said, How can this bee,
My tender plant appeareth not to mee,
Halfe so pleasant as it was the last day?
Hee said, Master, now tent take what I say,
No wonder is, this old tree is far mair,
And from the young takes all substance and aire.
By the reason the branches are so braid,

The seven sages.

So the young plant is so vnlikelie made:
For if this plant got the substance and air,
That this tree gets, with speed it would grow mair,
For is the old, for age almost is dead.

The Burgesse said, Hereof I know remead.
Cut downe the boughes and branches of the old.

Quoth hee, Master, I shall doe as yee told.

And so hee did: then after in short space,

To see the plant againe came the Burges,
And saw right well that the same tender plant,
Some needfull thing it did inlacke and want,

To the gardner hee said, How chanches this,
My tender plant it doth misthriue, I wish.

Show mee thereof the cause without leasing,

Hee said, Master, I suppose of one thing,
That is, the height of this high growing tree,
Holds alway the sunne, as thinketh mee,

Which giueth life and nourishing but doubt,
To euery thing that euer grew thereout:

And als the raine it may not come it neere,

Which nourisheth also some time of the yeere,

These two wanting, there is no tree can thriue,

The Burges said, that shall wee mend belive.

Cut the old cleane and quite downe by the roote,

For I suppose wee shall get better fruite

Of this young tree, noz of the old was had.

The Gardner did as his Master him bade.

Cutted the olde, and let the young stand still:

So he obey'd his Masters mind and will,

After short time, as this was done and wrought,

The seven Sages.

Both old and young perisht, and came to nought:
Whereof great harme and dule came to the poore,
For who was sick, of their health they were sure:
Hauing recourse vnto that noble tree,
Which to cut down it was a great pitie,
And when the poore perceiu'd it was cut down,
They curst and warped with many malisoun,
That any wise thereto gaue their counsell,
Or helpt thereto, they quite condemn'd to hell.
For why? the poore of all infirmities,
Were ay well cur'd of all their maladies,
Quoth she, my Lord, now haue ye vnderstand
What I haue said: quoth he, that I warrand,
Quoth she, the marche hereof I shall declare,
The which pertaines to your vnsonlie Air.

The declaration of this tale, tolde by
the Emprice.

This old tree is your own noble person,
That with counsell of your Lords of renoun,
The poore and sicke doe aye helpe and supply,
By your iustice and great nobilitie:
This young plant is your own vnthristy air,
For to destroy he casts him euermare:
By his cunning growing vp grece by grece,
As did the impe behind the meekle tree.
And for to cause to cut the branches down,
Who are your Lords, next to your owne person,
That he may reigne, and sit into your chyre,

This

The fuen Sages.

This is his minde, that hee does most desire.
Of this matter then what shall after fall,
All folke shall mourne, weepe, shewt, and call.
And warie them that cutted downe the tree.
Where that they went to get helpe and supplæ.
Or gaue counsell this young impe for to nourish.
But it destroy, or it bure fruite or flourish.
My counsell is, therefore the impe cut downe,
Since yet your selfe reignes in your hie renowne,
And suffer not the young Impe for to grow:
For hee shall doe daylie what euer hee dow,
You to destroy, and your body put down:
And purchase not the maledictioun
Of the pooze folke, to whom yee were safegard,
Therefore in haste take your sonne forth of ward,
And but delay on gallous cause him hing.
In doing this yee doe like a wise King
Th' Emperour said, Madame, now by the roode,
Your counsell is both wholesome wise and good,
The morne hee shall goe to the death most vilde,
Howbeit hee be mine onely gotten Childe.

The morne become hee called the Lords all,
Togeth' past vnto his Justice Hall.
The Emperour himselfe sate in Iudgement,
On pennall put his sonne incontinent.
And so at short hee was condemn'd to dead,
To be hanged on gallous but remead.
With mortall sound then passing him befozne,
Of Trumpet Shalme and als of blowing Horne:
As the vse was when any man should die,

The seuen Sages.

Should hee conuoy'd with so great menstrallie,
 And as hee past downe through the great Citie,
 The people mourn'd, saying it was great pittie,
 The onely sonne of the Emperour to hang,
 Many mourned, many their hands wzang.
 In meane season, as hee went downe the stræte,
 His first Master Pantillas could him meete,
 The Master saw hee was to Gallous led,
 With speede of Spurres to the Palace him sped.
 To whom the Childe so soone as hee him saw,
 Downe with his head, then hee inclined law:
 As hee would say, Master, if yee bee kinde,
 Now in my need, I pray of mee haue minde,
 For I am now, without yee get mercie,
 Condemned heere on Gallous for to die.
 Hee may well know then hee no tarie made,
 But in all haste vnto the Palace raide.
 Yet not the lesse vnto the Ministers,
 Prouests, Sergeants, Taylers and Officers,
 Hee made request that they should haste nothing,
 For hee belæu'd to get grace from the King,
 To saue his life hee shall not die this day:
 Then were they glad, to you the suith to say,
 All in one voyce the people bade him haste,
 So without bode hee rode as hee were chaste,
 At the Palace hee lighted off his Horse,
 Who should him dight hee tooke but little soyce,
 Of th'Emperour belue hee gote presence,
 To whome hee gaue on knees great reuerence,
 As him effeird, to whom the Emperour said,

Where

The seven Sages.

Where not I will your reuerence not degrade,
Yee and the rest right soze should punish't bee.
For your reward, yee serue no more of mee.
He said, My Lord, and please your Noble Grace,
Then haue I spent right ill my seven yeres space:
Taking labours on your sonne both day and night
In good Doctrine him teaching as I might.
Yet our labours at all wee not regarde.
But beleue well to get better reward,
The Emperour said, Thou liest Doctor, but doubt.
First vnto mee, then to the rest about.
Mine onely sonne well speaking, whole and fere
I deliuered: now yee haue brought him heere,
With no maners, but docted, dast and dumbe,
And more attour to shew thee all and summe:
Thogh he be dumbe, such thing may come on chace,
By God his will, or by good Ordinance,
But by all this, hee purposoe, which was worse,
Mine owne Ladie on maffrie to deforce,
And all her face with her rich ornamment,
In great malice hee hath all raued and rent:
Therefore this day hee shall not faile to die,
And after him thou and thy companie.
The Master said, with words mild and meeke,
As for your sonne, yee say that cannot speake,
The Lord of all that matter well hee knowes,
As yee shall know, hee is not dumbe but cause:
I trust in God, the suith you for to say
A thousand him shall heare speake on a day.
As for your wife, my Lord, where yee alleage,
Where

The seven Sages.

Where that hee would haue done to her outrage,
On trueth, my Lord I shall you shew but weere,
In companie with vs this many yere,
As well is knowne continually hath bene,
Such thing of him was neuer heard nor seene,
Therefore good Lord for your great reuerence:
To such boydesawes giue not too sone credence:
For if yee cause your only sonne to die,
For the false words of your wiues vanitie,
On chance it shall far worse to happen you.
For to a Knight whereof I shall tell you
That for the words of his vaine wanton wife,
Caude him bereaue his gay grey hound his life.
Which saued his sonne from slaughter of the Serpēt.
Then said the King, Tell mee forth that Legend,
Parillas said to him, My Soueraigne,
If I so did, then were my tale in vaine:
For ere my tale were all compleate but doubt,
Of your owne sonne the life may bee put out:
And then my tale for nothing it were told:
But if your Grace of your great mercie wold,
Retire your Sonne from the Gallous againe,
Then would I thinke my tale were not in vaine.
Therefore if that your Grace pleases to heare,
Yee cause your sonne while the morne to reteire,
That being done, when it is morne yee may.
Doe your intent when it is faire light day.
The Emperour then shortly to conclude,
With heauie mind this talke well vnderstood,
And caused the Child for to be calde againe,

Untill

The seven Sages.

Untill the morne in prison to remaine.
Then this Doctor right pleasantly began,
To tell his tale but awe of any man.

M O R A L I T A S.

I Can not say, but nay of this Burgesse:
For to assay alway, for greedinesse:
To cut this tree, would be of such riches,
I say for me that he proued foolishnes.
And als was not witelesse both tree and fruit he wanted,
The Gardner nor sakelesse to cutte so soone he granted.

It was euill done, so soone to cut it downe,
Though it abone conioyne, would not well foun,
With the young tree, to be at diuision;
I say for me, surely it was no reason:
I heard such a lesson better to haue in hand,
A birds possession, then two in wood fleeand.

A dogge I read, indeed a collap saw,
Passing through TWEED, with speed the shadow saw,
That it was more larger, the flesh leit saw.
Of it was clare, euen there of flesh and aw.
They vse in house and haw, what euer dinner coste,
Let beefe not from you draw, while that ye get your roste.

If this Burgesse that cace had well foreseene,
Such greedinesse doubtlesse then had not beene,
That noble tree so free, so fresh and greene,
So soone to be, shortly downe cutted cleane:
Great couetise, I meane, of this was all the cause,

As

The seuen Sages.

As hath beene read and seene into old Doctors sawes,

Timoth. 6.

Cupiditas est radix omnium malorum.

A reproach or reproofe to the
Emprice.

NOW thou thy tale hath tolde with thy false fierie lippes,
But not gotten thou would, light skirt for all thy skips
Had I thee in my grippes, on thee I should bee wrokin,
The beat into thy hippes, the salt sea will not flockin.
Thou art a baird full broken, a hideous bels birde,
Better thou had not spoken, condemnde deuils birde.

The tale of *Pantillas* the
first Doctor.

INTO a realme there winned a valiant knight,
Of noble fame, of great riches and might,
That had one sonne, my Lord, now as yee haue.
To thzee pourses to foster him hee gaue.
The first pourse for to giue him sucke and faede,
The next him wash, and keepe him cleane at need,
The third to bring him into sleepe and rest,
The noble knight for his child thought it best.
The knight also hee had a gay greyhound.
That none moze swift did run vpon the ground.
Also hee had a Falcon faire of flight,
Right swift of wing, when hee liked to light.

These

The seven Sages.

These two, the Knight loued aboue measure,
Because oftentimes they did him great pleasure.
This Greyhound was so swift, and of such speed,
When hee was loosed, his Prey hee caused ay bleed,
And this same Prey brought to his Lord anon,
This was one cause hee loued him alone.
Also when that this Knight went to battell.
If that his chance that time would not preuaile.
Into his mouth his horse taile would hee take,
About his lugges oftentimes hee would it shake,
Then youll and cry, as hee would quite run wood,
So by that signe the Knight well vnderstood,
If at that time hee would further or no:
And so oftentimes let him to battell goe.
His Haulke also was so fierce in her flight,
So swift in wing, and als so wonder wight:
That shee was neuer cast off to essay,
But without fault shee broked aye her Prey.
These were causes, this hound and haulke he loued,
Because to mirth they rais'd him oft, and moued.
Also this Knight kest all his whole intent,
In Horse-running, iusting and toznamenent.
So on a day hee caused to proclame,
At his Castle to set forward his name:
Who would come there to tournay or iusting,
Breaking of Speares, and als of Horse-running,
At the set day to bee match'd should not faile.
This was the cry, and so to short my tale.
The Knight himselve first entered in the field,
To the toznay, with Harnesse, Horse, and shield:
Then

The seven Sages.

Then after him past his faire Lady gent,
With her Ladies to see the Tournament,
Then after that, past all the nurishes thre,
The toznameant for to behold and see,
Locking the doores, leauing the child alone,
Trusting if he noz entris should be none:
While the Mornay and iusting should be done,
Then in all haste they should retorne right sone,
Belæuing well the haine not to awake:
None being there, but the hound and the hauke,
And the young chilbe that in the Cradle lay,
Except these thre, the rest all past away:
That no man knew lay lurking in the haw,
A great serpent, before no man did know.
When she perceiued the house so desolate,
And none therein that durst with her debate:
Out of her hole sone she put forth her head,
At this infant hauing a cruell lead.
Who lay sleeping in the cradle alone,
Him to destroy at short so is she gone.
The Falcon this beholding where she sate,
Upon her perke to doe she wist not what:
But with her wings she rustled, and rang her bells,
Almost she had all shaken them in shells:
So with the noyse and beir which made the hake,
This good hound rose, and of his sleepe did wake,
And when he saw that the serpent did creepe,
Toward the cradle where that the child did sleepe,
With a fell faird on the serpent he ranne,
And so at short these two to fight beganne,

The seven Sages.

So cruelly, that it was great maruell,
Which of the two at that time should preuaile,
One to deuoure, the other to defend,
These two at length together did contend:
So long at length these two together fought,
Almost the Hound all quite had lost his might:
So cruelly hee was wounded in blood,
That all about where that the Cradle stood,
Was blood berun, that maruell was to see,
Betwixt such two so bad bargane to be.
The Greyhound then perceiuing his owne blood,
Into his heart warr so cruell and woode.
With a fell faird vpon the Serpent ranne,
So them betwixt a new bargan beganne,
With such malice melancholie and ire
While one was dead that none of them would tyre,
Nor leaue the field, while it chanc'd at the last,
Betwixt them two the Cradle ou'r they cast,
With bottome vp, and on the tores it stood,
Where it was all about berun with blood.
So it became, and fell by Goddis grace,
That the foure tores saued the Childes face,
And sleeped still with visage toward the ground:
These to fighting, the Serpent and the Hound,
While at the last the Hound into certaine
This fell Serpent hee hath ou'rcome and slaine,
And sau'd the Childe from perill in that tide,
When all was done, downe by the Cradle side,
Licking his wounds lay downe this noble Hound.
For fighting soze, and so on sleape fell sound.

Beside

The seven Sages.

Beside, this Childe, which in the Cradle lay,
None in the House, but onelie the same thway:
The Babe sleeping, and knew no kinde of ill,
The Hound wearie, and foughten forth his fill.
The Serpent slaine, as I said you befoze,
The Babie safe, and the Hound wounded soze.
And so anone after this toznamenent,
Each man and woman vnto their lodging went,
To tell that day who wanne the enterpryse,
That erand now to my matter not lyes.
Wherefoze as now that thing I will let bee,
And let vs speake of the Pourishes thzee:
Who first came home, and entred in the haw,
So sone as they the blood and Cradle saw,
Wringing their hands, and riuing down their hair,
Crying alas, woe on vs euermare:
Our onely Child, our Babe and foster-bairne,
Is quite deuour'd with a Dog, and soze-fairne.
Alas for woe, alas what shall wee doe:
Wee know no place for succour to run to.
If our Master perchance vs appzehend,
There is none may from his hand vs defend:
But alway shall on vs come suddaine dead:
Wee know no way where wee may find remead.
Since so is come, let vs in haste all thzee,
To saue our life, but stay away to flee:
Euen so they did, and left the house alone,
But more counsell, all thzee away are gone:
And had no wit nor wise domie in their head,
To see whether the Bairne was quicke or dead.

The seven Sages.

For left the Cradle, and to perceine the case;
But ran away all thre crying alace:
And as they were passing forth the street:
Their owne Mistresse they chanced for to meet,
With her Ladies coming from the Tourney:
She perceiuing her Purples in the way,
Right sore mourning, and rining down their haire,
All woe begone. repleat of sturt and care,
Sone she inquirde at them how stands the case,
They answered her a thousand times alace.
What shall we say? for words to multiplie,
There is no bote, all men the case may see
A Deuill Madame into a Dogs skine,
Hath slaine your Sonne alone your Hall within,
In the which Dog my Lord had most delite,
But now hee hes of your Sonne made you quite,
In token yet where that the Cradle stode,
The Dog sleepes still now bathed in his blood.
Hee was the Dog that my Lords loued best:
Hee was no Dog, but with a Deuill possesst:
Therefore Ladie, for vs is no remead,
But either flee, or else to bide the dead:
Therefore Madame, of vs ye haue mercie,
This is the cause that causes vs to flee:
This shee hearing, anone fell to the ground.
Without moze space into a deadly swoone:
And at last Ladies caus'd her awake,
Held vp her head while shee began to talke,
And said, Alace, my deare Sonne art thou slaine:
Shall thou neuer play on my knee againe?

The. seven Sages.

Shall I neuer with my pape see thee play,
Alas how soone art thou so went away:
Shall I neuer thee laughing on mee see?
Alas, how is this dolour chanced mee?
Wherein I had mine onely most pleasour,
Except my Lord both by tide, time and hour,
Is now but doubt with a Dog cleane deuor'd:
And neuer againe to the life bee restor'd.
What shall I say: this is a carefull case,
Mine onely Sonne is dead and gone alace:
So thee mourning in great dolour and woe,
The people about that seeing did right so:
Mourned right sore, and of her had pittie,
In such dolour that Ladie for to see:
In the meane time, the Knight from his Tournay,
Retired home, and so saw by the way,
His owne Ladie lamenting in dolour,
Requir'd the cause of all her displeasour:
Shes saith my Lord, alace and enermare,
I cannot speake for great dolour and care:
Is happened vs a wonder cruell case:
Your Sonne is slaine for euermore alace,
With your grewhound whom that so well ye lou'd,
Now all that loue on your Sonne hee hath prou'd.
Hee hath him slaine in cradle where hee lay,
Your Pourishes all three are fled away.
And yet the place where that the cradle stood,
Your Hound lies sleeping in your Sonnes blood,
This your Grewhound without any helpe mo,
Your onelie Childe all quite hath tane you fro.

Where.

The seven Sages,

Wherefore my selfe vnto the houre I die,
Shall neuer eat while I reuenged be
Upon your hound, which hath my one Sonne slaine,
For in your bed shall neuer come againe,
While he be dead, that caus'd my one Sonne die:
But woe alas, this is no mends to me:
Howbeit it be a sythment to my hart,
Yet my great woe it flockins in some part.
Therefore my Lord, if ye thinke it be done,
Without delay cause slay your Grewhound soone,
The Knight hearing her sorrowfull tithante,
How to his Sonne had fallen such mischance:
Homeward in haste, but bode he made him bown,
And in the crosse when he was lighted down,
The Grewhound heard Horse-men into the cloits,
Among the rest he knew his Masters voice
And vp he rose in the blood where he lay,
To his Master the hie gate came his way,
Faint and foresoght, came fawning to his feet,
As he was wont his master for to meet.
Into great yre: what is there more to say?
With his sharp sword he cloue his head in tway,
And that onely for one word of his wife,
Got his reward that saued his sonnes life,
Then past the Knight but bode vnto the Hall,
Perceiu'd the blood, and als the cradle saw.
He lifted vp the cradle as it stood,
Found the child whole, and also much spilt blood,
Perceiuing then of the Serpent the head,
The skinne and taile that had foughten to dead:

The seven Sages.

And found his Sonne withouten wan or wound:
Alas he said, for my good gay Greyhound,
That I haue slaine withouten any cause,
But onely for the voide vaine words and sames
Of a woman, that hes talked in vaine,
Wherthow I haue but cause my Greyhound slaine
Which I perceiue hes saued my Sonnes life
From the Serpent, through his debate and strife:
Woe to the houre that now I drew my sword:
Woe to the eare that heard my wifes word:
Woe to the hand that sudden stroke that gaue
To my best hound, that my Sonnes life did saue,
Which I lou'd best without any compaire,
Except my Wife, my onely Sonne and Aire,
Which at this time he saued from the dead,
And for reward, now he hes lost his head.
But doubt I would haue given a thousand pound
Of good money ere I had slaine my hound:
But sen so is, I see is no remead,
My Sonne is safe, and my good hound is dead,
That fought for him and onely sau'd his life,
And I him slew through one word of my wife:
But from time forth here I solemne a vow,
That ilk man shall giue credence to and trow.
Here I forsake all Mornay and Jousting,
Here I forsake all haliking and hunting:
Here I forsake running with shield and speir,
Here I forsake all fates of men of weir
An Chyistendome but yet not mankinesse,
Here I forsake all armour and harnesse:

2 The seuen Sages.

For I will passe now to the holy Land,
And fight with Iewes while I may strike or stand:
Contrare Gods foes, and thereto end my life:
This bowed this knight for one word of his wife,
That vnto her gaue such hastie credence:
Without a cause or yet experience:
Therefore my Lord, your good grace I require,
Giue not so soone credence to the desire
Of your Emprice, though she be diligent,
Against your Sonne great leasings to inuent:
For ye may well by this same tale persauce,
What the knight got that so soone credence gaue
Vnto his wife, and vnto her wordes vaine,
That sau'd his Sonne that same Hound hee he slaine,
Therefore good Sir, and please your noble grace,
I would ye gaue no credence in this case
Vnto your Queene, to put your Sonne to dead,
For ye will rewe when there is no remead:
As did this knight, his noble hound that slew,
Remead by-past, then he began to rewe:
My Lord, he said, haue ye betane this Tale.
The Emperour said, that I haue done but fall,
For that good Tale that ye haue told to me,
As for this day my Sonne he shall not die:
The Doctor said, if that ye doe such thing,
Ye doe wisely, and like a noble King:
Thanking your Grace that onely for my sake,
Your Sonnes dead, onely ye haue done sake:
And so tooke leaue at the good Emperour,
To his marrowes past haue with all pleasure,

M O R A L I T A S.

THIS tale tells vs, who list thereto take tent,
That Nourishes should not be negligent;
To keep their babies who can not keep their sell,
From fire, water, and all such like perell:
That may happen to any innocent,

For into trueth my selfe this matter saw,
In Edinburgh towne west vnderneath the waw,
Therefore more sure the matter ye shall trow,
That an infant was swallow'd with a Sow:
The guts rane forth, both lung, liuer, and gaw.

The mother left the young one on the flure,
In blankets sit which child her owne selfe bure;
Past her way forth; and ere she came againe,
The greedie sow had this young babie flaine,
This my selfe saw / may say it more sure.

Thogh / not saw, this other / heard tell,
How a woman past forth but to the Well;
And left her babe in the cradle sleeping,
Ere she return'd the house was all burning;
And the young babe deuour'd with fire so fell.

Many mischiefes and also great offence,
Hes oft occurr'd by nurishes negligence:
That their babies leaues in the house allane,
Which is the cause of many bairnes bane;
As is oft seene by good experience.

Therefore mothers and nourishes I protest,
When that you put your young babies to rest,
Leaue not the house alone all desolate;
What may bechance oft-times right small ye wate,
To eschew danger doe ye the likeliest,

Als

The seven Sages.

Als in this tale I finde another thing,
How the serpent lay in a hole lurking:
Waiting while that the house was at quiet,
Many seruants now priuily playes the Pyat:
Much taking out, and small good will in bring.

These to Serpents right well I may compar,
From their masters ay taking late and air:
As Beif, Bacon, Malt, Meale, both Cloth and Coales,
Taking ay out, and hiding into hoales,
These are Serpents to you I say but mair.

As to this Knight which his good hound hath slaine,
That sau'd his sonne from all perill and paine:
Yee may perceiue by good experience,
It is not good to giue hastie credence,
Vnto wiues words that are both false and vaine.

Vntill the time they had perfectly seene,
How the whole cause and matter it had beene:
When they had knowne the vtter veritie:
Then had beene time the Dog to haue cause die,
Also the Nurish no way I can make cleane.

Then through the word of a vaine wicked wife,
Which oft is cause of mekill sturt and strife,
Caus'd him to doe the thing hee did sore rew:
Because the trueth that time hee cleane misknew,
And caus'd him reauue from his good hound the life,

Which instantly forsooke all running of speir,
All merrines and honest seates of weir,
All valiant actes of lusting and Tornay:
Hunting, haulking, and all such game and play,
His owne Realme for euermore forbear.

Yee maried men take here experience,
And siklike als perfit intelligence:

The seven Sages.

From hastie words of your wife till eschew,
For they will say, and cause you traistly trow,
Which is not worth a shell full of credence.

O wicked wight thou does all that thou can,
With false ingine euer to tempt the man;
When most hee makes himselfe for to destroy,
Then art thou glad, then makes thou mirth and joy,
Woe worth thy wit, thy bones he may sore ban.

Waried woman that ay casts thine ingine,
Thine owne marrow euer to put to pine,
So thou obtaine thy foule lust and pleasour,
Not regarding no way thine owne honour,
Which thou not cares for an old trumpe to tunc.

Curst Creature and also shamelesse seed,
An honest turne I cannot of thee read:
Excepting one that bure the blisfull birth,
Which with his blood brought vs all to great mirth,
To pray to him doubtlesse thou hast great need.

A Laud and praise to the Doctour, that put off
the first day by his Tale told to the Emperour.

O Pantillas with thy sweet suggured tounge,
which in great realms & kingriks hes bin rûg
And now at late to this good Emperour,
Which sweet sentence thou hast both said & sung.
And from all doubt and danger downe hast dung,
The Emperours great and ringing fierce furour.
Wherethrough thou hast procured some succour,
Vnto this child on gallous should beene hung
Had thou not bene God thank thee good Doctour.

The

The seven Sages.

The second Tale of the Emprice.

The Emprice word past incontinent,
That the Kings Son had not tholed judgemēt:
When shee that heard, but tarie shee fell downe,
For sturt and noy into a deadly swoone:
Whereof word came vnto the Emperour,
That his Ladie had tane such great displeasure:
And so anone fast thither hee him sped,
Found her right sore mourning into her bed:
So hee enquir'd at her what was the cause,
Wher shee said, My Lord, there is anew that knaues,
That earthly shame, despite and displeasure,
Done by your Sonne, is to my dishonour:
Whereof I can by no way get remead,
And yet promis'd this day hee should be dead:
But woe alas, I doubt right wonder sore,
It shall you chance as did an hirc and Boze.
The Emperour said, Madame I you enquire,
That tale to tell, for it is my desire
To heare it told by you the suith I say.
Quoth shee my Lord, I told one yester day,
Of it follow'd right small effect or nane,
Whereto should I another tell againe:
Howbeit thereto that yet giue great credence,
To set it sooth yet make right small defence,
Yet not the lesse at this time I will tell,
How with a Boze and shepheard it befell.

Vpon a time, there was an Emperour,
Of great wisdom, great puissance and honour:

And

The seven Sages.

A Forrest faire hee had pleasant to see,
Both gay and trim with many seemely tree,
Wherein there was running a great wilde Bair,
Both day and night hee made therein repaire:
All kinde of folke that this Boze might ouerta,
Without mercie hee did deuour and fla:
So that none durst out through the Forrest pas,
For doubt of death, the way so perilous was :
Whereof the King was heauie in his minde,
That his people was slaine on such like kinde.
With a dumbe beaste deuoured to the dead,
And by no way thereof could get remead.
In his Empire a crie hee caused proclame,
On his behalfe authoritie and name:
Who would debate or boldly take on hand,
With that bryme Boze in battell for to stand:
And him vanquish by strength of stalwart straike,
His one Daughter hee should haue to his maikie.
After his death, his Realme as hee were aire,
This should hee haue who euere slew the Baire.
This was proclam'de thow his Kinrik and land,
But none was found the deed would take on hand,
Except an Heard that in himselfe tooke heed,
Nigh I this Boze (quoth hee) bring to the dead,
Not onely I but all my kin also,
Should through that dard broke euer wooldly so,
And enermore in estimation bee,
So I had hap to-cause this dumbe beaste die,
Which I shall doe, or els to lose my life,
See I that Boze, we shall bee at the strife,

And

The seven Sages.

And so he tooke his Shepheards staffe in hand,
Went to the wood where he the Boze soone fand.
He may perceine how soone the Boze him saw,
Without delay toward the Heard did draw
With such a faird and als a felloun feare,
The sillie Heard durst neuer come him neare,
To saue his life, to see if he had hap,
But moze debate, vp in a tree he lap,
Incontinent when that the Boze so saw,
The tree to bite began and als to gnaw:
So that the Heard was soze fear'd in a part,
That the tree crop he should make turne downwart:
But yet the Heard bethoght him on a wile,
How that he should this bold brim Boze beguile:
It chanc'd so that this tree was laden full
Of noble fruit, which ay the Heard did pull,
Which he cast downe ay to the Boze to eat.
Whereof the Boze was glad that he got meat.
And fill'd him so, that he list well to sleepe,
The Heard that saw, and downe the tree did creepe,
By that an arme he hang into the tree,
With that other the Boze right quietly
Upon the wombe right softly can he claw
The Boze sleepeing, perceiued well and saw
At the tree root the Boze where that he lay,
With his bzaig knife his throat cutted in tway:
Then brought his head vnto the Emperour
With all gladnes, triumph, and great honour,
Saying, good Sir, and please your noble grace,
Your great wild Boze I haue him kill'd through race:
And

Not

The seven Sages.

Not doubting but your crie ye will fulfill,
You caus'd proclame with your counsell and will.
What e're he was that would kill your wild Bair,
He would marrie your daughter and your air.
When all your Court refus'd the same to doe,
With a stout heart I set my mind thereto,
And now on case the same man chanc'd am I,
And I desire your Grace fulfill your crie.
The Emperour said, all that I caus'd proclame,
Compleit I not it is to my defame,
What should be more? there he got to his wage
The Emperours daughter, and Realms in heritage,
When the Emperour past from this mortall life,
The whole Empire he braik'd, and his wife.
And so the bird on wombe he clew the Boze.
Wherethro he got the Kingdome evermore.
Quoth she my Lord, haue you not vnderstand,
What I haue said: Quoth he I take on hand,
Quoth she my Lord, yet then it were no skaith,
Thongh I you told the tale and sentence baith.

The declaration of this tale.

This mightie Boze betokens your persoun,
Thro whose great might, wit, wisdome & renoun
This whole Impire ye guide and als defends,
And punisheth what person that offends.
This bird I may to your Sonne well compair,
That would you slay, as the bird did the Bair.
With his cunning doth claw you on the wame,
While that ye sleepe, and then put you to shame.

The seuen Sages.

O: els you stay either by day or night:
This your Sonne doth by his science and sight,
That he may bzuike both your Empire and croun,
He cares nothing what come to your persoun:
Euen so his Masters, with their false faign'd salues,
Doe you ay glose, as all the world well knowes:
Therefore my Lord, as you will haue welfair,
Remember well on the shepheard and Bair:
Then said the King, God forbid that so be,
That chanc'd the Boze, that such thing chance to me
But not the lesse, Madame for your good tale,
My Sonne the morne shall be hanged but faile:
My Lord (said she) if ye complext that thing,
Then shall ye doe like an wise noble King.

MORALITAS.

Courage prouokes hardines,
Which two engenders strong manhead:
Which three adjoyn'd with happines,
Makes a man debate his plead:
Right so into this case this shepheard did purches,
The faire maden als sweet as mead,
With al her land & gold so red, god grafit him such grace.
Auenture good & haue ay good, for debate makes destinie
or euen which this shepheard stood, either to do, or els to
he was so stout and sture, of his life tooke no cure: (die,
therefore would thou esteemed be, set all on auenture,
and for to purches honestie.
No dignitie would thou thee dres, & coques thee honour,
Thou

The seven Sages.

Thou should not sleepe in idlenes, nor take thy pleasure;
Set all on sixe and seven, and perchance cast elleuen,
With prayer so & good labour a man may conqueis heauen
Denuding thee of all rancour.

A reproach to the Emprice.

THa crooked comparisons of your wild Bair,
Will win you no warifons, to you I declare,
Of Hell thou art the snare, Plutoes play soole in plaine,
In Hell then hold thee there, and come not heere againe;
But still ay there remaine, to be hung by the halfe,
Into perpetuall paine, because thou art so false.

THe morrow came, and but moze auisement,
The Emperour himselfe sate in Iudgement;
Condemn'd his Sonne on gallous soz to die,
Without respect that alkin men might see:
He being led out thzough the street and town,
With great regrait and lamentation.
The next Master came then the way riding,
And saw the Child to the gallous ganging;
Whereat he was both sad and sozefow.
But yet the Child to his Master did bow,
Inclin'd his head as he would said him to,
Master make speed ye know what is ado:
The master then pricked so in that stoure,
While he lighted before the Emperour;
With renerence as well could him effeir,
And at his Grace right humblie could he speir,
O my good Lord, who giues you this counsell,

Without

The seven Sages.

Withoutten cause your own Sonne downe to quell:
As this your wife that suchlike garris you doe:
Perchance yee shall vpon worse hap come to:
The chace'd a knight that throw his wife false saluex
Was put to shame without quarrell or cause.
Then said the King, Good Master I require you,
Shew mee that tale, and gladlie I shall heare you:
My Lord, hee sayes will yee cause call againe
Your only sonne, who is to suffer paine,
I shall you tell my tale sworth to an end.
And so the King againe for him did send:
Put him in ward where that hee was befozne,
While that the tale was done, and till the mozne:
So the Master the second tale began
Befoze the King and many noble man:
As yee shall heare, therefore giue audience,
But moze delay, and to your reuerence.

The tale of the second Master.

In to a Citie there was an Ancient Knight.
That had mari'd a Ladie faire and bright:
As yee haue one (my Lord to your pleasour)
And held her vp in all ease and honour:
Lou'd her so well aboue all earthly thing,
Like as yee doe your Quene my soueraigne King,
He lou'd her so, hee could not eat nor drinke,
But her presence, so on her ay did thinke,
And als at Euen, when all folke to bed past,
The gates and doozes also hee locked fast,
And all the keyes vnder his head they lay,

Euermilke

The seven Sages.

Cuerilke night while mozne that it was day,
And at ilke mozne, when hee thought time to rise,
Opened the doozes himselfe as was the gise.
In that Citie was a custome and law
Cri'd opentie, that ilke person might knaw,
At a set houre a Bell was rung at night,
That all might heare and vnderstand full right,
And thereafter withoutten moze delay
The Watch was let to wake while it was day:
Then after that if they could any meit,
Going alone, or walking in the street.
Soone they were tane, and into pzison led,
While on the mozne that all men rose from bed,
They were fast bound to a stocke or a tree.
To their great shame, that all the towne might see,
Then after that, induring their life-time
They wore repute as guiltie of a crime:
And holden soozth from all good companie,
This was the law that time of this Citie,
This foresaid Knight, whereof I spake before,
Was growne in age. an old man and an hoze:
His ramping rage of Youth hee had compleet,
And had stockned of bed solace the sweet:
Howbeit hee loued his Ladie well enough,
Yet as yee know moze graith pertaines the pleugh.
And shee perceiu'd of such craft hee did faile:
Shee toke in hand another to assaile,
And so shee did a man of tender age,
Into lusts bour soz to winne vassalage,
Who had a quiet Chalmer in the towne.

The seven Sages.

So euery night after the Knight lay downe,
Under his head the key shee stole away,
To her young loue shee went where that hee lay:
And so shee did as oft as euer shee list.
Tooke forth the keyes that her husband not wist.
And when shee came from her tryste and her traine,
Shee laid the keyes vnder his head againe.
So it befell vpon a winter night,
A waking came vpon this eldzin Knight:
Hee could not sleepe, yet waking as hee lay,
Hee turn'd about, and mist his wife away,
Vpon her name hee cried offer noz thrise,
Shee answered not then hee becouth to rise,
Sought all the house, by no way could hee finde,
And wist not well if shee was out or in,
Sought his bed-head, where that the keyes lay,
What, would yee moze: they are all tane away.
Past to the gates, all open them hee fand,
But moze aduise, hee closed them fra hand.
In a window that opened to the gate,
Much of the night, there sate hee at the waite.
And when it was about the third Cockcraue,
Waking her home his owne wife when hee saw:
Who found the Doores vpon her locked fast:
Hee may well wit that shee was then agast.
Neuerthelesse because the gates were locked,
For to winne in, pearlyly thereat shee knocked.
Then said the Knight, O thou woman vncleane,
Thinkest thou honour on streete now to bee scene,
O wicked wife, and dulefull waried wight,

The feuen Sages.

Why hast thou now deceiued thine owne Knight?
Of whom thou knew all whole thou had the heart,
Of thy balwdrie now am I well expert.
For this is not the first time thou hast done,
Such Harlotrie; thou shalt reu by yon moone.
While the watch come there still yee shall remaine,
And as law will, thereafter thole the paine,
Then said the wise, My Lord, why say yee so?
Where I was now there was witnesse far mo.
My mothers maid shee came and fetched mee,
Who lyes right sicke, and is in point to die.
And then because I saw you well on rest,
To awake you I thought it not the best,
That causde mee steale the keyes from you away,
I thought pittie to awake you as yee lay.
For why? yee know yee are feeble and old,
To awake you of your first sleepe yee wold,
Beene sicke the mozne and wonder ill disposed:
Therefore craibe not that your gates were unclosd
And my mother als is so wonder sicke,
A word to mee, scarcely shee had to speake,
Anoynted else, and made her latter will.
And now my selfe hath hasted mee you till.
Therefore, good Lord, I pray you hartfully,
Take no suspect, nor thinke no fault in mee:
For I had neuer such thing in my thought,
Since the first time to your bed I was brought,
Nor neuer had such thing into mine heart,
Nor neuer shall while death vs two depart:
Therefore I pray you let mee not bes tane,

The seven Sages.

With the towne watch here standing mine alone,
For now the houre approacheth wonder nere,
That the Watch rise, and they will finde me here,
Which is to me an everlasting shame,
And als to you it is a great defame.

Where I guiltie, or yet committed crime,
I would vouchsafe ye hold me out this time.

Then said the Knight, doubtlesse ye come not in:
For no prayer of you nor all your kin:

While that the watch betake you in the snare,
Then when yee were to them ye must declare.

Then the wife said, my Lord, if so yee do,
In great defame of vs both it comes to,

And all our kin, Allya, and our sciends,
And all other that either of vs pertaines.

Ere I be here now with the towne-watch found,
I had rather gine a hundred thousand pound.

Quoth he, ill wife, and woman far defam'd,
Thou hast so done, that thy selfe thou hast sham'd,

Far better were for thy fault punisht be,
And heere thole shame, that all mankinde may see,

Then for to thole punishment after dead,
In burning hell where there is no remead.

Then said the wife, my Lord, I you require,
In this one point to fulfill my desire.

Now for his sake that died on the tree,
Thole not such shame so sakelesse come on me,

The Knight answered vnto his wife againe,
All wicked wife, thy words are all in vaine,

Thou comes not in vntill the watches know,

The seven Sages.

And be punisht after the course of law.

Then said the wife, I perceue this is done

All for enuy, and ye are importune,

Then since so is, ye are impatient:

I will you shew in few words mine intent.

My Lord, ye know, at this gate stands a well,

Wherein but doubt now I shall drowne my sell,

Rather then I and all my kinne be sham'd,

And als your selfe shall not scape vndefam'd.

Then said the Knight, would God that such had bin

Long time before I saw you with mine eyne.

So as these two together was at talke

The moone wart darke, and hid was vnder walke:

Then said the wife, my Lord, and be your will,

That I heere bide, the same I must fulfill.

O, I bide heere, and for to shame my sell,

Rather I shall be drowned in this well:

But I will doe as a good Christian wight,

Ought to her Lord, and to a noble Knight,

Yet ere I die my mind is and intent,

Before you here to make my Testament,

Here to the Lord first I bequeath my saull,

My bones to lie in the Church of Saint Paul,

As for my goods, had I ten thousand pound,

Ten thousand lye ganging vpon the ground:

Als many pleughes ganging vpon the land,

Als many sheepe as thereupon might stand:

I would leane all vnto your owne person:

Them to dispone at your owne discretion,

And if ye please any thing for to deale.

And

The seven sages.

Into almes, for my well and soules heale,
That I referre to your owne wit and will,
What euer ye please, the same for to fulfill,
For well I know ye will doe but the right:
I say no more, my sweet husband good night,
As she that said, in her armes could she take,
A mekle stone, and in the well did swake.
That being done she came right prively
To the gate chæke, and stood right quietly.
The knight hearing the stone fall in the well,
Belæued well it was the Ladies sell,
And said, alace, my wife is down'd but doubt;
So in a fray the knight came rushing out,
And to the well he sped him but more baide,
The wife that saw in at the gate she staide,
And clos'd the gate right wonder sure and fast,
To the window in hast she could her cast.
In the meane time the knight stood at the well,
Mourning right sore and saying to himsell;
Woe to the houre that euer I was borne,
My loued wife, alace is now forlorne:
Woe to the houre that euer I clos'd my gate,
Woe to the houre in my window I sate,
To spy my wife which I know was sakelesse,
I am the wite now of her death doubtlesse.
Alace, alace, now is there no remead,
Through wilfulnes of vs both she is dead.
The Ladie heard in window where she lay,
And to the knight with sturdie words could say,
O ye old foole, that should be calde a knight,

The seven Sages.

What doe ye heere standing this time of night,
Out of your bed waking so wonder late:
Waiting your whores and harlots on the gate.
Might it not serue my bodie at your will,
But ye would passe your old whozedom vntill,
This is nightly ye vse the same passage,
Ye shall repent right sore your old ffolage.
The knight knowing the voyce of his own wife:
He was right glad that she was yet on life:
Saying, Ladie, well is me euer more,
Loving to God that I may heare you there:
For I beleeu'd ye had bene in the Well.
Quoth she, old fole, keepe thee out of it thy sell:
Thou serues better for to haue punishment,
For thy bawdzie, nor holie wayes to went.
Quoth he, Ladie, yet let such language be:
What is the cause ye say such thing to me?
When I locked the gate ye shall me trow,
I did nothing but to haue chastned you,
For in no wise I neuer did intend,
You to displease or any way offend.
For when I heard the noyse into the well.
Vnto mine heart there strake a cruell knell,
And in all haste ye saw as I came down
You to pferue that no wise ye should down.
Old dozened carle (quoth she) I heare thee lie,
Thou was ouer peart to iudge such thing of me,
But I perceiue this Proverbe is right true,
The vnjust oft the innocent doth pursue.
Thou lies to me, and hast done many time,

After

The seven Sages.

After the guilt when thou committes the crime,
As thou dost now that neuer to thee failed,
And thy great sight as now I haue assailed,
And haue thee tane into the sicker snare:
Wherefoze but doubt for mee thou shalt stand there.
While watches come, and with them to bee same:
In times by-gone an old soule thou hast bene,
That mee lightlied, thine owne wife and despised,
And to thy whoozes went oft times disguised:
And euer hast done since first time I thee kend,
All thy lifetime in lowrie thou hast spend.
But God will not let such unpunisht bee,
For many fault thou hast done oft to mee,
For hee is iust, and will haue such things shewne,
And I shall make it vnto the people knowne:
Therefore stand still, thou comes not in but doubt,
While the watches and all neighbour about,
What one thou art, they may perfectly know,
And thereafter to bide the straike of Law:
Then said the Knight, Ladie, I haue maruell,
To what effect should yee such to mee tell,
Yee know right well that I am old and haire,
And in this towne I haue bene euermaire:
And well I know wh re my name was proclaimed,
Untill this houre for no cause was defamed,
Therefore my Ladie, for the good Lords pame,
Thole mee come in, and let mee not take shame:
Shee said, Olde soule, thou spends thy time in vaine,
There shalt thou stand, and thole of law the paine,
Better it is to thole heere patientlie,

The feuen Sages.

Then euermore in Hell condemned be.
Salomon saith, thre things that God doth hate,
A pꝛeꝓroud man aboue his owne estate:
Then a rich man in consuetude to lie,
And an olde man a fond foole foꝛ to bee.
And so but doubt yee bꝛoke these vices thre,
What need had yee to lie so farre on mee:
As foꝛ riches yee haue enough at will,
Why should yee then your speech with falsset spill?
As foꝛ a foole, yee are one wonder couth:
Foꝛ as yee know, the flowꝛe of all my youth,
At your pleasure yee haue had euermare,
Yet to balwdie did goe both late and aie:
Wherefoꝛe God hath done wonder well you till,
Though yee contrare both his command and will,
Hath perseuered still in your harlotrie,
Yet hee will not therfoꝛe yee perish & bee,
But lent you grace your sinnes heere to repent:
Wherefoꝛe yee must bide the law and iudgement.
Then said the Knight, My Ladie best belou'd,
Howbeit God bee contrare a sinner mou'd,
Yet not the lesse as all sinners should trow,
God of his grace is to vs mercifow,
What time wee will foꝛbeare and als repent,
Then God foꝛgiues our sinnes incontinent,
Wherefoꝛe Ladie sinc. such grace God vs sends,
Now let mee in, and I shall make amends,
Then said the wife with voyce stout and austier,
Hence thee harlot, wher de'il gote wee this frier?
Talk what thou pleases, but truely thou shalt trow,
Thou

The seuen Sages.

Thou comes not in that heere I make a bowe.
And as they spake these words them amang.
In the meane time the Watches bell they rang.
Then said the Knight good wife let by such things,
Heare yee not now how that the watch-bell rings?
Suffer mee not for euer to take shame,
Which is forsooth degrading of my name.
Quoth she, ye know not what yon ringing meanes.
To the welfare of your soule it pertaines,
Therefore yee must take all forth patiently,
For your pennance you must thole openly,
A trespasser but doubt yee haue long beene
To God and mee, as shall bee heard and seene.
In the meane time, these twosome as they talked,
Up through the street the watches came that waked
Some into hands they tooke this noble Knight.
With great maruell, how hee into the night.
Upon the street durst forth of lodging bee,
They said to him, it was no Knights duetie,
Considering well the doubt of law hee kend,
Hee was ouer bold the contrare to pretend.
Shee hearing this, with a loud voyce shee cryde,
O my good friends, the trueth now haue yee spied:
Of that trouckour, and als a doted foole.
That his foule lust on no wise hee could coole:
But vpon whoozes forth passing in the night,
Passe yee if such pertaines to an olde Knight,
That my body at pleasure had all time,
Consider now if hee committed crime:
With whoozes all night, and comming in at mozne.
But

The seven Sages.

But of such faults I haue him oft forborne,
Belæuing ay such things hee should haue mended,
But yee may see if hee hath now offended,
Therefore if yee of such men haue correction,
Conforme to law yee punish his person
That such old Devils as hee so long hath bene,
May take example of him before their eene.
For hee hath bene to mee a great traitour,
I know such one yet neuer made nature.
Then the watches toke him incontinent,
To deepe prison with him in haste they went,
While day was light, and after the sunne rose,
With him the watch vnto the prouest goes,
Shewing to him the fashion to the end,
How in the night they did him apprehend:
And how to them his wife such plaints had made:
Incontinent the prouest but more baide,
To a pillar stood in mids of the streete,
Causde set him vp fast bound both hands and feet:
That all the people within that great Citie:
To his great shame might him behold and see,
And so this knight but any fault defamed:
Was through his wife so sakelesse euer shamed.
The Doctor then said humblie to the King,
And please your grace yee haue vnderstanding,
What I haue said: th' Emperour said right well.
Your sermon hath sentence so haue I seele,
The Master said, It shall worse happen you,
For chanc'd this knight, for trueth this ye shal trow
If that yee doe for the words of your wife,

The seven Sages.

Put down your sonne, and reave from him his life.
The Emperour said, that wife was far to blame,
That her husband put to such open shame,
And he sakelesse, the soule ill her betide,
She was the worst that yet did gang or ride,
And for that tale that thou hast told to me,
This day but doubt my sonne he shall not die.
The Master said my Lord, yet doing so,
Within few dayes both pleasure and great joy,
Of your own sonne, ye shall haue sir, but faile:
So this Master when he had past his tale,
Thanked the King of his beneuolence,
So tooke his leaue, and home ward is gone hence.

M O R A L I T A S.

All cunning Clarkes that could in stories write,
By all their craft could neuer yet indite,
The great mischief by women done to men:
The traitourie, displeasure and despite,
Heireship, slaughter, the great sorrow and syte,
At length to wryte it tyrd their pith and pen,
They were so huge, and vgly as ye ken,
The teinthe thereof they could get neuer ended,
Because to men so oft they haue offended.

Of them what sayes the great Philosopher,
ARISTOTLE, and als that digne Doctot,
CICERO, and SALOMON said some part:
For all his wit, great riches and honour,
They caused him be a great Idolatour,
And from great God causde him turne all his heart,
Likewise VIRGIL that was so done expert,
Still a creill they hang him over the waw,

The seven Sages.

To his great shame, that all the people saw;

ARISTOTLE which was the A per se,
Of naturall wit and great Philosophie:
They bridled him as he had bene an horse,
SAMPSON deceiued by great subtiltie.
What got Dauid for all his Prophecie,
Now ye may see neither wisdom nor force;
Cannot resist the curstnes of their corse,
Enough hereof who likes to read GWIER,
And what he wants now some thing sayes CHAUCER.

Therefore I say, I thinke it no maruell,
This gentle Knight whom of our tale we tell,
Considering he was so old and haire,
Deceiued was by this hogh-lop of hell,
With so great sight kest the stone in the Well
Alace, alace and wo for euermair,
She should escape, if then I had bene there,
To helped her, that firie brand so fell,
Her to haue drownde, mine hands they should not spare;

she making fault and he alwayes faultlesse:
She at her game, and he alwayes guiltlesse,
she being false, and he so traist and trew,
He being firme, and she alwayes faithlesse:
Did him accuse of that each deede doubtlesse,
Wherein her selfe was guilty well she knew,
For all his speech, nothing would on him rew,
Fy fy false feinds and furious hell furnace,
In bitter gale turnes all your game and glew.

Now, Sirs, perceiue her flight and subtiltie,
When he slept, she stole away the key:
Where she pleased passe forth to her pleasure,
When she came home so loud as she could lie,

Saying

The seuen Sages.

saying her mother was on point to die,
Wich many words dissembled vnder colour,
Forged with falset, lurking for displeasure.
And then at short how she made her testament:
O mercy, God, here is a false intent.

O subtle schrew, and very Sathans seed,
Impe of the Deuill: cares neither corse nor creed:
Tyner of trueth, with tongue intoxicate,
BELZEBVBES bairns, infernal burning gleed:
With fained fare, thy feirs well canst thou feed,
And flattering words fulfild all with deceate,
Lyned with leasings, Lawtie goes by your gate:
Net of the feind, in vengeance ye auaunt you,
Baner of baill, the Deuill he dow not daunt you.

Ye maried men in time keepe well your keyes,
Now may ye know such womens properties,
What mercy, grace, or good deed they will grant;
If ye desire at them any supplies,
Then shall they make to you a thousand lies,
You to obey are euermore obstant,
What they would haue, that thing they will not want,
In that they serue, giue them the spanzie flies,
That may serue well for such a vnsonsie Sant.

Who can excuse this double Deuils lim,
Such a false tricke so trimly play'd to him,
He in the fault and he so innocent:
By bitter bitch, bold burning Bair so brim;
Thy cleane conscience to heauen will cause thee clim,
Or downe to hell euer be permanent,
In PLVTOES palace there to be president,
Among that gracelesse garison so grim,
Great pitie were thou should be there absent.

For

The seven Sages.

For why? thou canst so well a leasing clecke,
Turne vpside downe, ay to thine owne effect,
Though of thy tale a word be neuer true:
Leasings to raine, thou takes but litle recke,
And the blamelesse ay to put in the blecke,
And make fine blacke of it was neuer blew,
Of a true tale thou canst well change the hew:
Therefore I pray the Deuill to breake thy necke,
Or in a seck to be drowned, adew.

A louing to the second Doctor.

GOD thank thee, Doctor for thy dayes wark,
Thou hast thee showne a noble cunning Clarke
The innocent hast succoured through thy tale,
Let the Emprice now bluster, bleare and barke,
For at this time she is put by her marke.
Trusting in God, that she shall not preuaile,
But yet I know againe she shall assaile
The Emperour with some storie so starke,
But her vaine words shall nothing her auaille.

The third tale of the Emprice.

THe Emprice heard how all the matter yead,
And how the child was not yet put to dead:
For very sturt in her mind was right two,
It was most like her heart to burst in two.
To her chamber then she past sone within,
And there began to skart and rive her skin:
And cride aloud that euer I was born,
Into my cudde would I had bene forlozne,
I being child vnto so great a King.

The seuen Sages.

That I should thole and suffer such a thing,
As of yon Deuill, and a rancke renigald,
Woe to deloaze so openly he would,
To my great shame and wooldly dishonour,
I beeing Queene vnto the Emperour,
And can heereof get no mends noz remead,
I pray to God if I were fairly dead:
So this was showane vnto the Emperour,
How this Ladie was in such displeasure,
Vnto all haste to her chamber hee went,
And said, Ladie, I pray you not lament
So inwardly, for it becomes you nought,
Take not so far neither in mind noz thought.
Shee said, My Lord, the loue I ow to you,
Makes mee moze sturt, in heart moze sorrowfow,
Then displeasure of yon dumbe Deuils dead:
Therefore good Lord, so great God mot mee speed:
The inward loue that I vnto you beare,
So causes mee remaine still with you heere,
Or els I had to my ffather departed,
To my Countrie, were not I am so harted,
To your behoue and pleasure night and day.
This is the cause I will not passe my way,
For if I did then a cause it should bee,
Of great discozd, and als enimitie:
Betwixt my father and you for euermoze,
This is the cause I will not passe therefore:
For well I know hee would reuenge my quarrell,
And to conquesse, put all this Realme in perrell,
For my ffather hee is a puissant Prince,

Of

The seven Sages.

Of diuerse Realmes, and of great reuerence.
Knew hee truelie of my great displeasure,
I know hee would increase so in rancour:
That this Countrie for that should sore repent,
That is the cause from him I mee absent.
For your pleasure, and yet yee will not trow,
That I would doe such pleasure vnto you.
The Emperour said Madame, bee well inclinde,
Let such malice remoue out of your minde.
For so long time as God will lend mee life,
I thinke neuer to faile to you my wife.
My Lord (said shee) I pray God yee liue long,
Howbeit that I doe liue in thraepe and throng:
But I dread sore, and heauilie I feare,
That it chance you that chanced this hinder yere,
To a great Knight, and to his sonne alone,
After the time that his Father was gone,
Through suddaine chance departed to the dead,
Yet his owne sonne would not burie his head.
The Emperour said, That was a fellon fead,
The sonne would not burie his fathers head.
That example I pray you to mee show,
Shee said, My Lord, will yee take heede and know
It shall doe you great good I take on hand.
Quoth hee shew foorth, and let mee vnderstand.
So shee began withall expedition,
As shee best could to say foorth her sermon.

In this Citie that now is called Rome,
Which in those dayes was head of Christendome

Then

The seven Sages.

There dwelt a Knight the sooth you so: to say,
Had but one sonne and hee had Daughters tway.
This Knight was giuen to Hauking and Hunting,
Great toznamenent, and to swift Horse running.
To merinasse and all kinde of pleasure,
That might hold vp and set soorth his Honour.
So euerie yeere so great riches hee spent,
Which thise ouercame his rentall and his rent,
Wherewith then grew to him skant of riches,
His daylie cheare and expence did decrease,
In that meane time there was an Emperour,
Octaviane, a man of great honour,
Which in riches so highly did abound,
That his compare was not vpon the ground,
That in so much hee had in his treasure,
Of gold and siluer, the which filled a toure.
Which gold and toure though hee had it large,
To a great Knight to keepe hee gaue in charge.
This other Knight whom of wee spake of aire,
That had spende his rent and meekle maire,
On idle games, as hunting and hauking,
Late sitting vp and out of time spending,
To such poozteth hee grew and great thirlage,
That hee behon'd to sell his Heritage,
Hee calde to him his sonne which was his aire,
And all the case to him hee could declare:
This is the cause but doubt (my sonne) said hee,
I am compell'd so with great pouertie,
That I on force and need must sell my land,
Except remead come at some other hand,

The seven Sages.

Wherethrough I may induring my life dayes
Liue honestlie: this to his sonne he sayes,
For if I chance to sell mine Veritage,
Ye know my Daughters will want good mariage.
He said, Father, if so it with you stands,
That ye on need auailie must your lands,
At your pleasure thereof I am content:
Doe as ye please, for thereto I consent.
The Father said, Now I haue tane in thought.
A good conceate, and tell it will I nought
But vnto thee: I know the Emperour,
Of gold and rent hee hath fulfild a toure:
Let vs two passe with instruments by night,
And breake the tour with subtiltie and slight,
Wee shall obtaine riches aboundantly,
Shall vs hold vp euer in honestie.
Then said the sonne shortly to make an end,
There is no man that counsell can amend,
It is better take from the Emperour,
Part of his Gold, his Silver and Treasure,
Then ye to sell your land and Veritage.
Wherethrough your bairnes shall liue aye in thirlage
So in one voyce these two did condescend,
To breake this toure but tary they intend:
So on a night with instruments they pass,
And through the toure au hole they goe at last,
Wan to the gold at larges where it lay,
Furnishd their sackes, and vnscrid came away,
Payed all his debts, and liu'd as merilie,
As of befoze, in every game and glie.

The seven Sages.

In hauking, hunting, and in toznamen^t,
While at the last the gold was gone and spent.
In the meane time the keeper of the toure,
Who had in charge all the gold and treasure,
Perceiu'd the hole, and the gold stollen away,
He was sozry, and knew not what to say,
Into a'l hast past to the Emperour,
And shew how thieues had stollen his great treasure
The Emperour said, in yze all angerly,
What is the cause thou shewes such thing to me?
To thee I gaue as to a true seruaunt
My gold to keepe, and that thou tooke on hand,
At thee againe I aske it to restore,
As it becomes thou shalt thole paines therfore.
When that this knight the Emperour so heard say,
He said no more, but humbly came his way,
And saw there was no matter to debate,
He unbethought himselfe of a conceat,
Thinking right well that they would come againe,
To seeke more gold, to take them with a traine,
Befoze the hole a tunne he causde prepare,
Hingled with picke, birdlime, and such like ware,
So thick and teuch, that who therein come wold,
Contrare their will there still it would them hold,
And none might come into that hole againe,
But he must needes fall in the samin traine.
Not long after, as I befoze haue said,
This other knight when he the gold spent had,
He and his sonne againe went to the toure,
To steale more gold then from the Emperour,

The feuen Sages.

So the father first in the hole he went,
And in the tunne he fell incontinent,
Into the neck, and there stak as a stone,
Considered well that his fortune was gone:
Said to his sonne, come thou forward no way,
For at this time I am tane for the pray,
Come thou forward, thou shalt not faile to die,
And none of vs another may supplie.
Then said the sonne, if ye may not escape,
Then are we both but doubt tane in the rape:
God vs defend father, that so not bee,
But at this time ye get some help of mee,
And if I may not help you now my self,
In hast I will both help and seeke counsell.
The father said, I see is no remead,
But with thy sword thou must strike off my head,
And when they finde my dead body headlesse,
Then shall yee all of this shame be sakelesse.
So none shall know what person did this deed,
Nor in whose brest those bargaines did imbred.
Then said the sonne, now father, by the rood,
Your counsell is both honest, iust and good.
For if so chanc'd in this case ye were knowne,
Also our shame to all men should be showne.
So should we not escape the cruell dead:
So I thinke best that I smite off your head:
And euen with that as he had said the word,
Out of the sheath anon he drew his sword,
His fathers head he hint off hastely,
And in a gutter he kest it nere hand by.

When

The seven Sages.

When this was done, then past he home his way,
To his owne house vnto his sisters tway,
Shew them the case and all the matter haill,
Who soze did wepe priuily and bewaill.
Then after this the keeper of the toure,
Who had in charge the gold and the treasure,
Where the hole was within the tunne he fand,
A headlesse corps vnto the neck standand:
Whereof he had both maruell and dreadeur,
In hast he past, and told the Emperour,
Incontinent thzough all the town then yead,
How there was found a body but a head,
Into the tanne the which the knight did set,
Who stole the gold to take him in the net.
Then to this knight the Emperour said but faile,
Take the dead corps and knit to a horse taile,
And draw it thzough the strætes of the citie,
And perceiue well where any murmure be,
Any sorow, start weeping, or mourning:
Then may ye well perceiue where that such thing
Be attained, where any person mournes,
They are guilty, and know of such like turnes,
And is principall of that each house but doubt,
That stole the gold, therefore seeke well about:
If such yee find, take them and all their fellows,
Without mercie cause hang them on the gallous.
The officers without delay they went,
And complected the Emperours commandement.
When the daughters the dead corse saw come by,
For inward woe they gaue an hideous cry.

The seven Sages.

For kindly loue, and fatherly pitie,
To see that corps so drawen through the citie.
When their brother, the sonne of that dead Knight,
Heard them so mourne, bethoght him of a sight,
Wherefore the corps through the citie was drawen,
To the people the cause was right well knowne.
And wist no way for to eschew the case,
So he himselfe soze wounded in the face,
While that the blood abundantly came out,
That the sisters of his life had great doubt.
The officers perceiued the weeping,
The noise, the cry, the sturt and the græting:
Into the house they entered but delay,
And demanded wherefore they made the fray.
Then said the sonne, when my sisters me saw,
So soze wounded, as now your selfe may knaw,
They wept and cride, and mourned in their mood:
And as ye know few women may see blood.
This was the cause of the great lamenting,
Of my sisters we know none other thing.
The officers hereto they gaue credence,
Because they got no more experience,
But went their waies deceiued all and blinded.
Cause the right way they could not seeke nor find it
Then toke the corpe of this same headlesse Knight
On the gallous let it hang day and night,
Till all the people did wonder and maruell,
Of the stolne gold when they the tale heard tell:
And yet the sonne after his fathers dead,
Would not burie in the Church-yard his head:

The seuen Sages.

For off the tree his body would downe take.
This did the sonne for his owne father sake.
He may perceiue the great loue and fauour,
To his father hee had all time and houre.
The Emprice said, Good sir, and please your Grace,
What haue I said, haue yee well tane the case?
The Emperour said, Madame, so haue I well,
What yee haue said, I haue it tane right well.

The declaration of the Emprice
third tale.

THe Emprice said, I am right wonder wo,
That of your selfe and your sonne it bee so,
For his sonnes sake the Knight as I haue told,
When hee was poore, his Lands hee left vsold.
When hee wanted hee had none other shift,
But for his sonne then hee committed theft,
And that his Wairnes after that hee was dead,
Should haue no shame, he causde strike off his head
And yet his sonne would not doe such reward,
To burie his head in Church nor yet Church-yard:
For yet would not neither by night nor day,
Downe off the tree take his body away,
In the same sort both night and day yee labour:
For to promote your sonne to great honour:
Both day and night hee sets all his intention,
You for to put to vtter confusion,
And you destroy is daylie his desire.
That he may reigne, and bryoke the whole Empire,
By counsell is yee rather put him downe,

The seven Sages.

Erre hie from you get the Empire and Crowne.
The Emperour said, So mot I thine and thee,
A good example now haue yee shewne to mee:
I might haue tholde after his fathers dead,
Yet by some slight to cause burie his head.
Truely my Sonne he shall no longer scape,
Upon the mozne hee hanged in a rape.
To Officers alone hee gaue command,
To take his sonne, and to hange him fra hand:
Downe through the streete they led him hastelie,
To the gallous but mercie for to die.
And as they led the young man through the street,
All the people began to mourne and greet,
Saying alace the Emperours onelie child,
To the gallous is led there to bee fylde,
Alas said they, what is his fathers minde,
To his one sonne for to be so unkinde?
Now is this thirde condemn'd hee hath bene,
And few can tell what doth the matter meene.
But all this comes by the Daemes false conceat,
What hee is led so oft downe through the gate.
In the meane time downe the gate is hee gone,
The thrid Master came riding called Craton,
And saw the Child so wonder neare the dead,
To his Master yet hee inclinde his head:
As hee would say, Master haue minde of mee:
Doe yee not well there is no dawne but die.
The people cride good Master haste and ride,
And for your Child good helpe that yee prouide,
So in all haste but any moze delay,

The ſeuen Sages.

To the palace hee ſpurred his good palfray,
And when hee came beſore the Emperour,
Hee hailed him with reuerence and honour:
Who made anſwere to the Maſter againe,
Though yee bee come your voyage is in vaine,
Your coming heere ſhall nothing you auaille,
Yee are come heere to flatter mee with your tale,
The Maſter ſaid, Within ſeuen yeeres ſpace,
Better reward I haue ſerued at your grace,
Yet I beleue to get better reward,
And pleaſe your grace that my talking bee heard.
Reward ſaid hee, at mine hand ſerue yee nought,
For the dumbe boy to mee that yee haue brought:
Ye ſerue all ſeuen the verie painefull dead,
Each one of you to gallows to bee led.
For I deliuered my ſonne ſpeaking to you,
Quite dumbe but ſpeech ye ſeuē haue made him now
And alſ hee would haue defiled my Quene,
Contrare her will as is well heard and ſeene.
The Maſter ſaid, Where yee ſay hee is dumbe,
Will yee ſuffer but a ſhort time to come,
I find you heere the mightie God to borrow,
That hee ſhall ſpeake ere the fiſt day at morrow:
For hee that made the dumbe man for to ſpeake,
The deafe to heare, to health reſtore the ſicke.
Hee will reſtore your ſonne to ſpeech againe,
Within few dayes, and that I ſay in plaine,
And where ye ſay hee would deſoꝛde your Quene,
If any man hath euer heard or ſeene,
Such conditions either by late or air,

Since

The seuen Sages.

Since hee with vs remained or made repaire,
That hee is guilty of all that yee haue said,
Then I to die theretofore am wonder glad.
But Salomon sayes right well into his Booke,
Who like therein to read, and soe to looke,
No malice is, nor was, nor yet be can,
Abooue malice of an ill giuen woman.
That shall I proue by an example good,
That women are the fountaine and the flood,
The verie roote and speciall inuention,
Of all falsset, leasing and deception,
And if yee put your sonne now to the dead
For your wiues words, her falsset and her fead,
It shall chance you as it did to the man,
That slew his Wy, through sight of a woman.
Which bird hee lou'd aboue each other thing,
And ay the trueth it told him but leasing.
The Emperour said, I pray thee tell mee that,
Betwixt the man, the wife, and the Wyat.
The Master said, Your Sonne againe cause calw,
That hee thole not the vtter charge of law,
Then shall I tell my tale to your pleasure,
To your profite, welfare, and als honour.
The Emperour said, Master, for this one day,
Hee shall not die, come after what so may:
The Master said, God thanke your Grace againe,
So hee his tale began, as folloves plaine.

The seuen Sages.

MORALITAS.

WE will continue now at this place,
The Doctors tale a litle space,
And some thing we will tell,
Of the Emprice comparison,
How she comparde the Kings person,
Vnto a thiefe so fell.

She compared the Emperour,
To the false Knight that brake the towre,
When he should sold his land,
For poorteth was compelde to steale,
Looke ye if she comparde it leale,
And so well she it fand.

This Knight committed traitourie,
That stole from the authoritie,
Either great thing or smaw,
Wherefore he serued for ro hing,
For who that steales ought from the King,
They may not bide the law.

Likewise this Knight as was well knawne,
Out through the citie he was drawne,
To his great lacke and shame:
Then hanged on the gallow trees,
Perceiue how these two well agrees,
To the Kings great defame.

And her owne Emperour compared;
To a poore Knight was all despaired,
A traitour and a thiefe,
That she so would was most likely,
That the Emperour so should be,
God send her a mischiese,

The seven Sages.

As to the Knight that would sold his land,
And waxt so wonder poore in hand;
And alwayes superspended,
Who euer spends by their due rent,
But faile shall after sore repent,
When he may not amend it.

Thereafter comes necessitie,
Hunger, poorteth and pouertie,
To steale that he must need.
Then tynes he honour and manhead,
And thereon followes shame and dead,
Of ill spending it breedes,

Had this Knight spended with pleasure,
According to his owne treasure,
After his facultie:
He should not need to breake a toure,
Nor stollen gold from the Emperour,
Nor poore not needed be.

Good Sirs that haue rent and riches,
Be not in spending so reckles,
But with reason and right:
For then of force he must sell land,
Or els take some euill deed in hand,
As did this headed Knight.

Who scaped once and past againe,
Still ay in slouth for to remaine,
Which all men should forbear:
It may chance once a man to sin,
But he should no wise lye therein,
Nor still to perseuere.

For as that one Knight found a wile,
That other Knight for to beguile,

The seuen Sages.

And take him in the net,
Euen so the feind is finding ay,
Some new gate to fang in his prey,
Who ay to sinne are set.

The birdlime is to hold them still,
And ay in pleasure take their will,
For as the gold was sweet,
That causde this Knight to come againe,
That is, in sinne ay to remaine,
While they yeeld vp the sprit.

Then art thou sicker in the snare,
When death comes thou dow doe no mair,
But to the gallous led,
That is to hell without remead.
Then all thy gold that was so red,
It stands thee in no stead.

Therefore who would liue in honour,
See they their geare spend with measure,
Be not ouer liberall,
Spend not in prodigalitie,
But as effeirs thy facultie,
Or doubtleffe want thou shall.

sometime may chance a man spend mair,
Vpon a day then he may spaire,
To spend in other nyne
grant, but yet ye should consider,
But sparing dayes and them together,
And so small shall ye tyne.

Of spending is three kindes of branches;
The first to spend he neuer stanches,
So long as he hath heale:
But euer spending in a rane,

The seven Sages.

While all that he hath is quite gane,
On force this man must steales

The second spends with great honour,
With honestie and good measure,
Neither meekle nor skant;
But sometime spares, and sometime spends;
And guides well that which God him sends;
So this man can not want;

The third he is so great niggard;
To spend hath neither hand nor heart,
And ay sayes he hath nought,
Euer sparing and euer wants,
And to haue geare he neuer grants,
For all that euer he wrought.

Of these three let vs take the mids;
The wise man then expresly bids,
Therefore I you beseeke;
This is no honest man to grieue,
But see that ye put not yout sleine,
Further then hand may reeke.

A reproach or reproofe to the Emprice.

CORRUPTED corse uncleane, thou springing Well of vice,
Thou fickle feinds Queene, thou perillous ill Emprice,
Thou cruell Cocatrice, and kindly Crocodile,
For all thy tales nice, thou shalt not get thy will.
False giglot jangling gill, thou poysoned spewing spout,
Thy bones burnt on an hill I thinke to see but doubt.

The

The seven Sages:
The Tale of the third Master, of
the Burgesse Pyat.

Vpon a time there dwelt in a Citie,
A noble man, and a Burges was hee:
That had a Bird well fed vp in a Cage,
Which wex a Pyat doe call in our language.
This Bird thee was so well learned to speake,
That thee could talke Latine, Hebrew and Greeke,
And when thee had these languages perfite,
Her master tooke of her a great delite.
So by processe, all thing thee heard nor saw,
To her Master incontinent would shaw.
This Burgesse man hee had a wife right faire,
As yee now haue, wanton and debonair:
Which ouer all thing hee loued all the best,
But by contrare, her lone was not so drest,
Because it passed from the Burgesse might,
Her appetite to complish day and night.
As thee desire at her pleasure to haue,
What would thee then, but chool'd another knaue,
With her to play as thee thought best pleasure,
Whome thee best lou'd, and held him in fauour,
And so behou'd her husband on a day,
To other townes in voyage make journey,
For marchandise to buy and for to sell:
For marchant men at home aye may not dwell:
But in this world to wander, worke and win,
While off this life that they depart and twin.
But yet this wife had not such thing in mind.
To her pleasure her thought was all inclinde.

So

The seven Sages.

So when her spouse forth of the towne was went,
Without tarry then for her love shee sent,
That they might make good cheare and merinelle,
As the good wife thought shee could best addresse.
And so they did at their owne appetite,
When louers meetes, of others take delite.
This said the Wy, on her perke where shee sat,
What merinelle that her husie was at,
And to her master tolde when hee came home,
And caus'd her husie to get outrage and blame.
So them betwixt rose by a bargaine stout,
Which many of their neighbours heard about.
The good wife said, Now well, sir, I perceine,
What great fauour and love to mee yee haue,
And said, yee giue more trust vnto your Wy,
Then vnto mee, and more her sets by:
But so long as your Wyat is on life,
It shall not faile but wee shall bee at strife,
The Burges said, My Wyat cannot lie,
All that shee sees the trueth shee will tell mee.
For shee cannot by no way nor ingine,
Any leasing into her heart diuine:
And therefore I haue more cause for to trow,
All that shee sayes farre better then trust you.
So day and night continually they chide,
While on a day the Burgesse buske to ride.
In farre Countries to doe his marchandise,
As it effeirs such men, and is the guise,
But als so soone as hee his wayes went,
For her louer shee sent incontinent,

The seven Sages.

To make her blith, great solace and good cheare,
But on the day hee durst neuer come neare.
For great slander of people and common voice.
All the day long while night hee held him close.
As the night came hee knocked at the gin.
Shee was ready thereat and let him in.
Shee said, Wee are right welcome vnto mee,
You may come in, for no man will you see.
Hee said, My loue, your What soe I feare,
For shee will tell all shee can see or heare.
For shee raised such tales betwixt vs else,
That all the towne to other plainlie tells,
Shee said, Feare not, but boldlie enter in,
On mee I take both perill and the sin:
So hee entred, and tooke no more in thought,
And by the hand through the Hall she him brought,
And as these two through the Hall made passage,
The fillie Wy where shee sate in the cage,
To her Husie shee heard her louer say,
Wee shall bee blith and make merrie while day:
For you are shee that I loue all the best,
But I feare soe the What vs molest.
Quoth shee, feare not, I bid not for to lie you,
It is so darke the What will not see you.
Then said the Wy, howbeit I may not see you:
I heare thy voyce, for right well know I thee:
To my Master thou dost a great iniure,
For of his wife thou makes a common hure:
And his best bed which hee beleuees is cleane,
Thou dost defile, which is well knowne and sene.

The seven Sages.

Which my Master when hee comes home shall know
And the true trueth soothly I shall him show.
Then said her loue, mine heart told I you not,
That we would both be speed with the Wyot,
And tell the trueth of all shee heard and saw,
And euerie word make her Master to know.
Take yee no feare thereof then said the wife,
For talking shall perchance cost her her life,
And this same night I shall reuenged be,
Upon the Wy. as yee shall heare and see.
So they to bed past both withouten feare,
But what became the Wyat yee shall heare,
About midnight by this good wife shee rose,
Cride on her maide, and put on both their clothes,
Incontinent a long ladder they get,
And to the roose of the house they it set,
And tir'd the house about the Wyots Cage,
Where that firelaughts and rain might get passage,
Blenkes of Candles about the Wyots head,
Most like firelaughts, with cold water there yead,
Small stones like Pease vpon her head they kest,
Most like hailestones, so this Poore Wy was drest,
So all the night without any remede,
Was this Wy pinde almost vnto the dead.
So on the morne alway the young man staid,
At a backe doore where none him heard nor saw,
So this Burges came home within few dayes,
And to his Wy first hee goes to and sayes,
O my best bird, now tell mee of thy cheare,
How hast thou far'd since I departed heere?

The seven Sages.

My bird (said he) what hast thou scene or heard?
Tell me the trueth for thy goodly reward.
Master she said, I shall you truly tell,
What that I heard, I saw, and what befell:
Ye were not past off this towne day and night,
When that your wife did to you great vnright:
An other man into your bed she laid,
And all that night together they two play'd:
And I them shew that they were both to blame,
That I should tell to you when ye came hame:
Master but doubt this is a truthfull tale,
Your wife I see is not for your auale.
To the next point at me where that ye speere,
How I haue far'd, in what sort was my chære,
In your absence surely I say you right,
So great a stozme as there was yester night
Waide I neuer, since first time I was clected,
For yet my death so soze I not suspected.
As that same night, but doubt I say you plaine,
For very feare of fireflaughts, haile and raine,
All the night ouer it rained so on me,
That I beléen'd but doubt drowned to be.
Then said the wife, sir, ye beleue your wy,
How may ye know what kind of woman am I
Ye may now see, and also may perceiue,
In times bygonie how that your wy did reue:
A fairer night was neuer on the plaine,
Then was that night, that she sayes it was raine,
A fairer night, a softer and moze cleare,
More pleasant night I had not all this yere,

The seven Sages.

Therefore ye shall in all times forth to come,
Giue her no faith, no more nor she were dumbe.
When this burges knew not well what to say,
But to neighbours sone past he on his way,
And demanded if such a night was fair,
That his Wyat suffered the cold and cair.
They said, neighbour, I walked all this night,
More solacious, more softer and more bryght,
More stable a night, more curious and cleare,
Nor was that night saw I not this seven yere.
Unto his house this Burges bowed hame,
And thought right well his wife had seru'd no blame
The sillie Pie he put in all the wite,
And of all faults he thought his wife was quite,
And said to her, I find you traist and trew,
Wherefore ye shall haue no cause for to rew.
At my neighbours I haue asked all about,
Euen as ye say, eachone they say but doubt,
A fairer night, they say none could be found,
Then was that night, more softer and more sound,
And it requires to other who offends,
With all their heart for to make them amendes
To you therefore a garment of the new,
I promise you, because I find you trew.
She said, good sir, sauing your reuerence,
Ye said not so when ye gaue firme credence
Unto your Wy, which falsly on me ly'd,
Saying that I committed such a deed,
That neuer was into my minde nor thought,
Nor in the world such thing I neuer wrought.

Tristram

The seven Sages.

With her leasings betwixt vs she hath sowne
A great discord, which all about is knowne,
Where through I am blasphemed and defamed,
Through all the towne by your false Wy and shamed
Wherefore no meat nor drinke shall doe me good,
While that I see your false Wyats heart blood.
Then the Burges vnto the Wyat past,
And said, false Wy. tell how becomes this cast,
Upon my wife so falsly for to lie,
Causing discord oftymes with her and me.
Is this the thanke, the gansell and good deed,
Thou renders me, so well I could thee feed,
With mine owne hands, with meates delicate,
Carely at mozne and als at euening late:
Through thy leasings thou hast made through y town,
A great slander, and foule defamation,
Whereto she gaue no more consent nor reed,
Then I my selfe gaue vnto Gods dead.
The sillie Wy heard her Master say so,
Into her heart she was right wonder wo.
Master she said, God knowes if that I lie,
Your selfe will trust the very thing ye see:
And well I wote, the thing I said to you
I heard and saw, why should I not that trow.
The Burges said, I heare thee lowdly lie,
Knowes thou not well this tale thou told to me,
Where was a night so troubled in the Aire,
With storme, fire, flaghts, haile raine & mekle maire
Of ill weather thou had no other reed,
But biding ay the bitter houre of dead.

The seven Sages.

Which is right false; and neuer a word is true,
Therefore but doubt thy falsset thou shalt rue,
And from henceforth thou shalt no leasings make,
For of true tales thou shalt not make a crack:
And in speciall betwixt me and my Wife,
The law will well that it cost thee thy life:
For the great lies thou didst inuent and forge,
With this same knife I shall cut off thy gorge.
So in great wrath he tooke her by the neck,
And with a knife her head he did off neck:
The Wife saw that, and she was wonder glad,
To her husband with merines she said,
Now haue ye done as a man of prudence,
Howbeit before ye gaue ouer great credence
Unto your Wy, which ay right falsly leid,
Mine heart is glad now when I see her bleid.
Now may we liue all our lifetimes in rest,
Since she is gone that did vs ay molest;
For she was ay the very instrument,
Betwixt vs two all leasings did inuent,
We blyth said he, that instrument is hence,
Forsooth to her I gaue ouer great credence,
Now I know well all that she said was false,
But now therefore she hath lost life and halfe.
The Burges then blent vp about his bigging,
And saw a hole turred in the house-rigging.
And well perceau'd a little ladder stand,
A water tub, with stones water and sand,
Which was downe cast vpon the sillie Wy,
Then the Burges well vnderstood thereby,

That

The seven Sages.

That the poore Wy had told his tale right trew,
All the falsset and fashion then hee knew,
How they had caused the Wyot for to lie,
Through their falsset, and great subtiltie.
Now of my wife the falsset I persauce,
In time by-gone how shee hath play'd the knaue,
Not regarding sinne, shame, nor honestie,
But with her loue lying in Harlotrie,
Full woe is mee, how great a foole was I,
For her falsset to slay my sillie Wy,
Wherein I had my pleasure and delite,
Alas, alas, my wife had all the wite,
But in no wise my selfe I can excuse,
That her counsell so greatlie I did vse:
But in a part but doubt I was so blinded,
And now the trueth full sickerly I find it.
Woe worth the time I gaue her such credence,
Or to her tale I gaue such audience.
Woe worth such wines that are so ill inclinde.
Euer hauing so fained heart and minde,
With double heart full of subtiltie,
I you assure they are ill companie:
Because my wife hath wrought mee such like woe,
Here I giue ouer all mirth, gladnes and so,
All marchandise, housholding and harbie,
In time comming a pilgrim I will be.
And makes mee here vnto the holy land,
Because I find no faith in woman stand,
So this Burgesse for credence that hee gaue
Vnto his wife, left land and all the laue.

The seven Sages.

The Master said vnto the Emperour,
Sir, haue yee tane this tale into fauour?
And what it meanes, the samine vnderstand,
Hæ said, Master, right well I take on hand,
The Master said, Was shee not a false wife,
With her leasings causde reauē the Wy her life,
The Emperour said, Shee was of falsset fow,
Her great leasings, noz her life I allow.
Of the pooze Wy, sozely I doe repent,
That lost her life for speaking verement.
Surelie Master, a good tale yee haue told,
And for your sake this day I will cause hold
My sonne vndeade the mozne while it bæ none,
God thank your grace (quoth he) that such hast done
To the Lord God I heartly you commend,
So this Master with blythnes home hæ wend.

M O R A L I T A S.

O Marueilous God, the subtile slight,
Suchlike / trow was neuer seene;
Thou waried wife and wicked wight.
Of this Burgesse wife now / meane.
So partly could auow, & cause her husband trow
That shee so saklesse was and cleane,
An innocent as shee had beene;
Then of falsset fow.

So full of falsset as she is,
For when they marke to doe amisse,
A thousand sundrie wayes they haue,

To

The seven Sages.

To bring their matter to when they haue ought to doe,
The wisest man they ay deceiue,
And this Burgesse among the laue,
It is not so quoth she.

So priuily she could prouide,
A posset for the sillie Py,
And with such craft she could it guide,
Changing the weather and the Sky,
The bourgaires did beguile the poore Py with such wile:
Hurde vp of whoredome vpon thee fy,
Glutton of glew all wee may cry,
Thou art a vessell vile.

The lauce that thou serues at mine hand,
I cannot well indyte:
To cause thine husband vnderstand,
Of such vengeance thou had no wite:
O rancke ramping lyon to mischiese euer boun,
Steward of strife who can thee quite,
Clecker of care and of despite,
Great mistresse to Mahoun.

Yee that haue wiues, giue not credence.
Ou'rsoone vnto their subtile sawes,
They will assoone finde a defence,
As they were learnde into the lawes:
For when they speake fairest, their tale is ay falsest.
They will neuer giue ouer the cause,
Though all the world the contrare knowes,
Their owne tale they aye thinkes best,

At sometime she will cause a man
To doe the thing he will repent,
When it is done no wise she can

Remead

The seven Sages.

Remead therefore for to inuent;
Cause the saklesse get wyte, make her selfe cleane & quite,
Therefore though she be impatient,
And in boldnesse her brow all bent,
That care ye not a mite.

Be not readie to giue reward,
Though she it serue, while that thou see,
This Burges so in minde was mard,
While that the silly Py slew he,
Then promis'd her a gown, or els a new garmos,
For her whordome and harlotrie,
And her scabbed scurrilitie,
Fy mothers malisoun.

O rwyte vntrue, and tale vnicker,
Kindler of care bold balestrod,
Though one would bind thee with a wicker,
Thou wilt not keepe good rule nor rod.
Thou art a furious flame, a Wolfe and seemes a Lambe,
Thou art a traitour wylie Tod,
That stinkes into the nose of God,
Thou art the Deuills dam.

A louing to the third Doctour and Master.

HOnour & praise good Doctour mot thou haue
That this one day the child thou hast caus'd
With thy true tale and example persfite: (saue,
Beleeuing well, so shall doe all the laue,
Though the Emprice with her tales would defaue,
The Emperour all for the childes despite.

But

The seven Sages.

But at the last I know he will her quite,
When ye and he the sooth well does persauce,
Where ye find fault, there shall ye lay the wite.

The fourth tale of the Emprice.

When the Emprice heard the child yet on liue,
She wept right soze, & all her haire did rine,
Saying alas, wo worth the time and houre,
That I was wise vnto the Emperour.
Crying, mourning, and rining doſone her face,
While the great noyce paſt out thzough all the place
The Emperour heard the murmure at the laſt,
Incontinent he to her chamber paſt,
Inquird the cauſe of all her deepe diſtreſſe,
She curſt the time that ſhe was made Emprice,
Would God (ſaid ſhe) when I came to theſe parts,
Howbeit that I had ſoure and ſwentie hearts,
Within my bowk, that they had all bene rent,
In ſmall pieces, ere I were dayly ſhent,
On ſuch faſſion, as I am day by day:
But that your Grace ſayes neither yea noz nay,
But whiles ye ſay, but doubt your ſonne ſhall die,
And other whiles in great deſpite of me,
He continue his life, and takes no cure,
Of my great ſturt, the ſhame and the iniure
He did to me, and als ſhame to your ſell:
Of this matter wherefoze ſhould I moze tell?
For it is knowne out thzough the whole countrie,
To what great ſhame he purpoſe to bring me,
But ye thzough ſleuth dills down and lats ouerazine

The seven Sages.

So day by day your sonne is yet on liue.
The Emperour said, I pray you stand content,
And without doubt the mozne incontinent,
He shall haue law, without any remead,
To be hanged on gallous to the dead.
But yesterday it was a principall caue,
That he tholde not the iudgement and the lawes,
Was for a tale that the Master me told,
Hea then (said she) that is the thing they would,
Prolong the time, lipning the court shall change,
If ye doe so that is a matter strange.
For their faire words good Justice for to breake,
So vnto God ye haue a small respect,
But I feare soze, ye with your Masters seven,
It shall you chance the same example euen,
As once it chanced into this same citie,
An Emperour and seven Masters had he,
Whom to he gaue credence both day and night,
They him beguilde with their false fraud and sight.
The Emperour said, that tale I pray you tell,
With the Masters and Emperour how it fell.
She said, whereto, or to what fed should I
Tell any tale, when it is not set by,
For yesterday a tale to you I shew,
Which in the selfe was very iust and trew,
For your honour and profite I it told,
Thereon to thinke yet on no wise ye wold.
For your honour and profite what I will say,
Upon the mozne the Masters does alway:
And with their tales dayly turnes vpside down,
Which

The seven Sages.

Which is but doubt for your destruction,
As in this tale that I shall tell to you,
And please your grace: for trueth ye shall it know.
He said, Madame, heartly I you require,
I pray you tell, for it is my desire.
That by the same I may the warrer be,
And to eschew falsset and subtiltie.
Though I delay my sonnes dead for a day,
It not answers nor cleanly takes away,
I shall it shew (quoth she) be it your will,
So ye will giue good thought and minde therewith:
Quoth he, tell on, and I shall heare it then,
And so at short her tale this wise began.

VPon a time I read into a quair,
In this citie sometime seven Masters were:
Through whose science, great wisdom and learning
All the Empire was ruled by their guiding.
The Emperour which at that time did reigne,
But their counsell he tooke in hand nothing,
So he them held in such ease and daintie,
That he could not well want their companie.
They perceiuing his heart to them so kinde,
His goodlie will, his dayly thought and minde,
That he could doe nothing but their advise,
They were all seven holden so wonder wise,
They kest in minde a wonder subtle thing,
By sorserie, inchantment and cunning,
That how long time the Emperour he bade,
In his palace, neither past forth nor rade.

But

The seven Sages.

But therein still held him in companie,
He saw as well as any man could see:
From his palace if he went any time,
Through their flight craft he could not see a time,
And this they did to the samin intent,
That they might with more libertie frequent,
And intromet and vse the samin things,
That appertaines to Emperours and Kings,
And to dispone at their will all their rent,
This was their mind, their thought and als intent,
By the which thing these Masters did purchase,
Unto themselves, gold, geare and great riches,
And yet howbeit with their great sozcerie,
They made this King a time he might not see,
Off his palace when he past ay was blind,
Among them all the way they could not find,
With all their craft againe to cause him see
Out of his palace, but euer blind was he.
Aboue all this, these Masters found such craft,
All the Empire almost they made cleane dast:
If any man had dreamed an vncouth dreame,
The whole knowledge thereof they should expreime,
And make thereof interpretation,
For a Ducate, or yet a golden crowne,
Whereby they gote more gold and great treasure,
Almost as much as from the Emperour.
So by this way, and other false and flie,
They conquest gold, great riches in plentie,
More in respect then had the Emperour,
And to them seven giuen dayly more honour,

The seven Sages.

So on a day when that the Emperour,
With his Emprice together with honour,
Sat at table, to sigh in heart began,
The Emprice saw, perceiued and said then,
What is the cause, shew me of your dolour:
Why sigh yee so, or take you displeasure?
The Emperour said to his Emprice againe,
Haue I not cause of sorrow and great paine.
That I so long in such sort should bee blind,
And can thereof no good remedie find.
My Lord said shee, will yee tent to my tale,
On honestie it shall helpe and preuaile,
If yee will doe after as I you say,
Yee shall allow my tale another day.
In your Empire seven great Masters yee haue,
And I beleue the seven doe you deceiue,
And are the cause of all your great disease,
And all your rowmes they guide euen as they please
And to themselves appropriats your rents,
Through their false wayes and subtle inchantments
If it bee so, that they bee found guiltie,
A shamefull death doubtlesse they serue to die,
Therefore, my Lord, for all these seven yee send,
And aske at them if they can helpe to mend
Your great disease, and soze infirmitie,
Where your sight failes, againe to cause you see,
If they say nay, and can finde no remead,
Charge them sharplie vnder the paine of dead.
And so yee may consider well and see,
If they bee cause of your great maladie,

The

The seven Sages.

The Emperour allowed well this tale,
And thought right well it was for his auaille,
Incontinent to them was sent message.
For to complete anone they tooke voyage,
And come kneeling befoze the Emperour,
Who them receiued in freedome and fauour,
And shew to them his great infirmitie,
How he was blind, and had such maladie:
And how sometime that hee saw wonder well,
And other times how hee saw neuer a tell,
Then chargde hee them sharply on paine of dead,
Incontinent they seven should seeke remead,
For it was showane to him of veritie,
They were the cause of his infirmitie,
And get they not remead incontinent,
Unto the death they should bee all torment.
Unto these seven thus said the Emperour,
Whom of they stood in great feare and dreadour:
Then said these seven againe with on consent,
We charge vs fir, with inconuenient.
With suchlike charge your grace now puts vs to,
It passes far our power for to doe,
It is so hard and so difficill a thing
That wee cannot to good purpose it bring:
Into short time, but please your noble Grace,
For to grant vs respet for ten dayes space,
Wee shall you giue answer comuenient.
Whereof I trust youre Grace shall stand content.
Of their answer the Emperour was appealed,
Believing well of sicknesse to bee eased,

The seven Sages.

So these Masters vnto their counsell past,
To see if they could finde the way or cast.
Fassion, ingine, supplie, meane or remed,
Or any helpe to saue themselves from dead:
And for to heale the Kings infirmitie,
They kest the way, for them it would not bee.
Wherefore they were all seven right sorrowfow,
And said, Get we no helpe nor remed now,
To helpe this charge as we eachone doe ken,
Without remed wee are all but dead men.
Wherefore let vs make all remed fra hand,
Sooke and search forth eachone in sundrie land,
If that wee can in anie Countrie find,
In time comming the Emperour bee not blind.
And so they sought in manie sundrie towne.
By East, by West, South, North, both vp & downe,
It hapned them to ride vpon a day,
Through a Citie where bairnes were at the play,
In the meane time came to them an old man,
And said, Masters, I pray you if ye can,
Of my nights dreame to make interpretation,
And for your wage I shall giue you a Crowne.
One of the bairnes that was then at the play,
To the Masters heard that man suchlike say,
And said, Good man yeis giue a Crowne to mee;
What meanes your dreame I shall you tell truelie,
The olde man said I dreamed this hinder night,
That in my yarde of water sprang vp right,
A fresh spring wel, from whence came many springs
Through al the eird: now tel what such thing means.

The Ieuē Sages.

Then said y^e Bairne. Take y^e a Spad good-man,
In the selfe place passe and delue if y^e can,
Where that y^e thought the water first bp-sprang,
There shall y^e find within a space not long,
An hurde of golde that samin hole within,
Shall make you rich for ay and all your kin:
So did this man as the young bairne commandit,
And as hee said, this man right so hee fand it.
Then past this man to this young childe againe,
And thought hee would reward him for his paine.
And offered him a pound of readie golde,
Which by no way receiue from him hee would,
And said, Good man, no gold I will receiue,
But pray for mee, at you no more I craue.
The seven Masters perceiuing all this thing,
How a young Childe of yeeres being so ying,
With such wisdomē the mans dreame did expone,
Said to themselues, wee maruell who is yone,
Of so young yeeres, makes such interpretation,
And then therefore takes neither gold nor crowne.
So at this childe these seven inquired the name,
Hee said, Merling, wherof I thinke no shame.
Quoth they your name brooke well with all welfare,
Wee perceiue well yee haue wisdomē and lare,
A great matter wee haue to you to know,
Of the which few or none but wee doe show,
Then said the Childe, shew mee foozth your intent,
And yee shall haue answere incontinent.
Quoth they young childe, this is the verie case,
A maladie holds the Emperours Grace,

The seven Sages.

So long as he in his palace will bide,
And not thereout neither to gang or ride,
He sees as well as one that euer was,
But as soon as he from his palace passe,
There takes him then so great a maladie,
That all about a time he may not see,
And if ye can the cause hereof discusse,
First ye shall haue a great reward of vs,
And secondlie remead if ye can find,
In time comming the Emperour be not blind;
Out of his palace when he pleases to passe,
He will giue you reward what ye will aske.
Then said the child, his maladie I know,
Als the remead thereof I can him show.
The Masters said, we pray you right hartlie
Passe with vs seven and beare vs companie,
While we come to the Emperours presence,
Where ye shall haue reward and reuerence.
Then said the child, sirs, I am readie now,
Passe when ye please, and I shall goe with you.
And so all eight incontinent past hence,
While they came to the Emperours presence,
And when they came vnto the Emperour,
They hailed him with reuerence and honour.
And said, good Lord, sundrie lands haue we sought,
To get your health, and here we haue you brought
A good young child, that knowes your maladie,
At your pleasure will find help and supplie,
In time cumming, that ye shall well perceauie,
Your daylie health, and no sicknes to haue,

The seven Sages.

Neither in one nor in another part,
He hath such wit in good cunning and art.
The Emperour vnto these Masters said,
Of your tythance I am right wonder glaid,
All that he sayes, will ye seven take on hand?
Pea sir said they, at that same we will stand,
For we haue seene by good experience,
His great wisdome, craft and intelligence.
The Emperour then vnto the bairne he said,
Since such a thing good child is to you lard,
The cause thereof at you I would inquire,
And soone my health heartly then I desire.
Then said the child, and please your noble Grace,
The two alone must talke a little space.
In your chamber I shall you show truely,
The cause of all your great infirmity.
And when he was into the chamber led,
He causde cast off the clothes of the bed:
Which into haste the Emperour causde be done:
My Lord, he said, now heere ye shall see soone
A marueilous thing, which you heard neuer tell,
Under the bed there was a meekle Well,
Of which there rose a foule smooke and a reeke,
That would haue made a man both blind and sick.
Out of this Well there sprang seven great springs,
The Emperour then he maruelled of such things,
Under his bed to be, and he not wist,
So great a Well, so foule a reeke and mist.
He said, my Lord heere plainly ye may see,
The very cause of your infirmity.

Without

The seven Sages.

Without ye put these springs and Well away,
To get your sight againe no way ye may.

The Emperour said, I pray you to me tell,
The nearest way for to vndoe this Well.

Then said the child, there is no way but one,
If it please you on force it must be tane.

The Emperour said, I pray you right heartly,
Shew me the way if such a thing may be.

Gold nor goods on no wise will I spare,
So that the trueth to me you will declare:

If mans craft, his naturall wit or might,
Perfect cunning, with good science or sight,

Subtle ingine, art or experience,

Might helpe my sight, or therefore find defence,

I would not care for to giue gold plentie,

Spare for no cost, so that ye cause me see

Without my place as well as I doe in,

So your reward from me well shall ye win.

Now sith your Grace to me hath giuen credence,

I shall you shew by good experience,

The very trueth: these seven springs y^e see spring

Out of this Well, they are none other thing,

But the same seven Masters by their science,

Whom to ye gaue so firme and great credence:

Which by their craft, cunning and inchantment,

You to make blind, this Well they did inuent,

That from hence forth both you and your Empire,

Long time bygone haue rulde at their desire.

About your place haue euer made you blind,

So that effect that no fault y^e should find,

The seven Sages.

Done any way by them or their consent,
That their great guile should not be made patent,
For heare complaints of your Barons and Lords,
But they alone to agree such discords,
For that iustice should reigne into your land,
But all such things should lye into their hand:
And your subiects to spoilye euerie day,
All that was greene to you it should seeme gray,
Ye not seeing, now should they all be dead,
For your blindnes they can find no remead.
The Emperour said, now haue ye to me showane,
Of my blindnes the cause and made it knowne:
Now the remead thereof I would ye sand,
Ye shall not want both gold, lordship and land:
And please your Grace, now to you shall I tell,
The verie trueth, will ye doe my counsell:
Of your blindnes if ye desire remead,
The first Master take and strike off his head,
Then shall ye see the first spring of the Well
Be quite away: this is the trueth I tell,
So orderly while they be eachone aaine:
And so ye shall recure your sight againe.
This being done, the Well away shall went,
And so at ease ye shall get your intent:
Which in good haste was done as they thought right
And so againe the Emperour gotte his sight,
And the young child rewarded right richlie.
Made him a Lord, and heire of a countrie.
Then said she Lord, haue ye perceiu'd this tale,
That I haue showane for your good and auaile.

The seven Sages,

Hee said right well, and thanks you heartfullie,
For that good Tale that yee haue told to mee.
In the same sort these seven Masters said thee,
Unto your Grace they purpose for to doe,
By their false tales and suchlike fainzeing,
That your curst sonne may ay abone you reigne,
Which God defend ay while the houre I die,
That I neuer another Emperour see,
This tale (quoth thee) I shall make to you cleare,
What that it meanes, & please your grace to heare:
Hee said, Say forth yee shall haue audience.
And commanded echone to keepe silence.

The declaration of the Queenes
fourth Tale.

This flowing Well of your sonne is the signe,
The seven springs are his Masters with cūning
Which Well right soone cannot destroyed bee,
Except yee first cause the seven Masters die,
This being done the Well so shall yee waste,
Cause slay your sonne of this yee giue mee traist,
So Well and springs fra they destroyed bee,
Then may yee haue all at tranquillitie,
Your whole Empire well into peace and rest.
Forsooth (quoth hee) Madame I thinke that best,
Incontinent then gaue hee strait command,
To the gallous to lead his sonne fra hand,
Downe thzough the street as officers him led

The seuen Sages.

One Master came, and at the Spurres him sped,
To th' Emperour with all good reuerence,
Whom to hē said, Passe swith from my presence,
For the god send that yē haue send to mē,
Yē serue all seuen on gallous for to die,
I send you seuen my sonne right well speaking,
Now hē is dumbe, and als can doe nothing,
But onely one, this thing I most defest,
By violence my Quēne hē would opprest.
Therefore reward yē serue nothing of mē,
But yē all seuen with him shall hanged bē.
The Master said, I seru'd a better thing
To my reward, no; on gallous to hing.
Where your grace sayes that now your son is dumb
God knowes the cause, the time is not yet come.
Of his speaking the time will come at short:
Therefore I pray your Grace to take comfort.
And yē shall see the time approach right neare,
That he shall speake, which all this place may heare
As to your Quēne in that point where yee tell,
It is not prouen, no; neither is gossell,
Nor for the words of a singular person,
Without more prooffe your son should not put down,
And if yē doe for the words of your wife,
But good knowledge from your sonne take the life:
It shall be worse with you I dare well say,
Then chanc'd a man and a wife on a day,
Which I shall shew to you by narration,
And proue the same by good probation.
The Emperour said, trow yē to doe with mē,

The seuen Sages.

As seuen Masters did once in this Citie,
With their false tales vnto their native King.
Say, nay, not so, it shall not bee that thing,
The Master said, The fault of one or two
Should not redound to rebuke, blame or woe:
Of all others, for it is right well kend.
Both good and ill isto the worlds end.
But of a trueth one thing I shall you shaw,
But yee your sonne to death for your wines saw,
It shall you chance as did this hinder yee,
Vnto a Knight, if yee please yee shall heare.
The Emperour said, I pray you shew mee right,
What thing became or chanced that same Knight.
The Master said, Againe your sonne cause call,
Go to the death that hee no wise bee thall,
And keepe him still, my tale while I haue told,
Then your owne will yee haue euen as yee would,
When I haue done then take your owne pleasure,
Will doe so then said the Emperour,
And so his sonne againe hee causede them caw,
As for that day hee should not thole the law.
So this Master his example begane,
And tolde his tale forth like a cunning man:
But yet his tale ere wee further forth set,
The Quenes last tale wee will not yet forget.

M O R A L I T A S.

See the conceat of this bold bitter Bitch,
This red Reuar, and this rancke warloch Witch,
His traitour thiefe, this tryed Termigant,
Asaine a fault as shee would find and fitch,

Vnto

The seven Sages.

Vnto these seven so reuerent and rich,
In sweet science, facund and fluctuant:
For they of wit nor wisdom not does want,
To the blacke Deuill I thee therefore beteach
With him remaine in house an hells sanct,

Father of falset, and false flatterer,
A gyrecarling and gracelesse clatterer,
Leadstarre of lies, and a great sloop of seele,
A proud Princesse, a pridefull patterer,
Mixt with malice, and a maine murtherer,
A wood wild cate, that neuer will doe well,
Crop of curstnes, and a quicke ganging Deill,
Boot of wanrule, and brewar of all baill,
Thou art too bold to forge so false a tale.

Not one word true thereof, but fained faire,
Too peart thou art to make such a compare:
Of the Masters, whereof that now speake we,
To the Emperour I know they did no mare,
But that his sonne they had into the lare,
And had not beene their cunning and Clergie,
They had beene dead, and likewise so had he,
Therefore thou art but a Loch of vnlawtie,
A shamelesse shrew, the master Deuill mot skald thee,

Yet in her tale is some morality,
How God disposes his grace so plenteously,
To old, to young, to rich and to the poore:
Some wit, some strength, some fairnes with bewty,
Some at their will haue riches and pleny,
To diuers craftes some giues their busie cure:
Howbeit to some hid things be right obscure,
As was this Bairne who spake this prophecie,
To seven Doctours in science was so sure,

Howbeit

The feuen Sages.

Howbeit he was in youth and tender age,
God of his grace had giuen him more knowledge,
In wit, science, hid with subtilitie,
Nor to those feuen whom this Queene doth alledge,
Into her tale inferred vpon foolage,
Who caused the Emperour againe to see,
And knew the cause of his infirmitie:
None exception there is of personage,
In sight of God he giues his grace so free.

Howbeit this childe in tender yeeres was ying,
The very trueth yet he shew to the King,
What was the cause of all his maladie,
And how the Well vnder his bed did spring,
And how those springs could him to blindnes bring,
Which was not knowne but to this child truely,
Whereby we may perceiue for veritie,
The grace of God is gotten for nothing,
Who list it seeke with all humilitie.

Now in bigging some takes so great pleasure,
While at the last bigges himselfe to the doore:
Some brings a staffe for to breake his owne head,
Euen so ye see these Doctours tooke labour,
To bring this childe vnto the Emperour,
Whom through he got of his sicknes remead.
But yet this child causde them all feuen thole dead,
It is oft seene, I say thee dearely brother,
That euery swik oftentimes beswickes another.

These feuen Doctours whereof now speakes our Queene
As she inferres, they haue all traitours bene,
Who deuised the Kings infirmitie,
By traitourie, hid holden and vnseene,
To be guiders of his Realme they did meane,

The seuen Sages.

And haue thereof the whole authoritie
But no wise so of our Masters meane we;
For they did not but as they were desired,
By the Emperour, and his Counsell required,

Therefore the Queene she should no credence haue,
She is a sop of sorrow to deceaue,
A menslesse monster, a mirrour of mischance,
A patent port to ill ye may perceaue,
A thriftlesse thing when she begins to raue,
Full of deceat with fained false pleasance,
A towne trattlar, to bring home euill tythance,
A mane truikour. an talker out of tone,
And shall forthinke her talke ere all be done.

A reproach ro the Emprice for her last tale.

O Fragill fl sh of hell, with flattery euer fenyeis,
A Kingdom thou wouldst quel, thou grownder of gloryeis
We shal holdin thy renyeis, because thou raues & mocked,
And checke you into chenyeis, up by the chafis chocked:
Our long ye haue vs mocked, but yet the day will come,
Your culum shall be knocked, when he speakes that is dumbe.

The tale of the fourth Master.

Vpon a time there was an eldering knight,
Wise and wittie full of riches and might,
Had liued sworth manye yeares of his life,
Without children lemmen, or married wife.
Diuers times his freinds came him vntill,
To see if it was his pleasure and will,

The seven Sages.

To take a wife, and bairnes for to forth bring,
Throughe their counsell he granted to such thing,
So at the last they gotte his wife to be,
The Princes daughter of that same great citie:
Which was right rich, well favoured and faire,
Well made at will, and was her fathers air:
For he her saw, he was so tane in loue,
That he from her his heart could not remoue.
Though loue & fauour betwixt them might be sene,
Yet all their space no bairnes was them betwene,
Unto the Church as she past throughe the stræte,
With her mother she hapned for to meet,
Either other hailed with great gladnes,
And so began to talke in merines.

The mother said, my daughter tell me how
Ye please your spouse, or how he doth to you?

She said, right ill, I am not with him content,
For he is old, feeble and impotent.

When ye me flaked vpon so old a sticke,
I would but doubt ye had buried me quicke:

For ere I come with him in naked bed,
To be drowned I had rather be led,

Or ly with swine, ere I lay by his side,

By flesh it vgs when that I touch his hyde:

Hold me excusde I pray you hartly, mother,
For it is force that I must haue another.

The mother said my good daughter and deare,
Here I thee pray such foolishnes forbear:

With your father many yeeres I haue bene,
Such thing of me was neuer heard nor sene,

Mother

The seven Sages

Mother, she said, of that no maruell is,
For ye two met in youth-hood joy and blis,
And so echone together had solace,
It is not so with me into that cace.
Ere I him gote, ye know his strength was gone,
He lies as still beside me as a stone.
For he is weake, old, cold, wasted and drie,
And as ye know, mother, so am not I:
But in my flowres of youth-head blooming græne,
Compare therfore is not vs two betweene.
Of his bodie I can get no solace,
To me therfore it is an heauie cace.
She said, daughter, if such thou hast in minde,
And to solage thine heart is so inclinde:
Tell me thy mind without faining in best,
Whom wilt thou loue? (quoth she) mother, a Priest,
The mother said, if such thou wouldst desire,
I thinke lesse sinne to loue a noble Squire,
Or a gay Knight, nor a Priest to thy loue,
She said, mother, therein I you reproue,
If that I lou'd a Knight, or yet a Squire,
Within short time of my loue they would tire:
And tell ou'r all into their merines,
And so me shame to my great lightlines,
It is not so, ye know with men of Kirke,
For with wisdom and wilines they wicke;
And are as loth their honestie to tine,
In such affaires as I would doe to mine,
And counsell keepe as quietly vnshamed,
As ye or I with our Spous would be blamed,

The seven Sages.

All kirke men are moze kinde to their loues,
Then others are, and so the practicke proues.
Shee said, Daughter, heare me good counsell now,
And it shall bee a good profite for you.
Olde men, yee know, are wonder cautelous,
Willie and fell, and right outragious:
In one maner yee shall your Husband proue,
Him for to tempt, or anger him, or grieue:
Then if yee scape but reproue or smiting,
Loue whom yee please at your lust and liking.
The Daughter said, So long I may not bide,
In all good haste, a loue I must prouide:
God hath mee sent so unhappie a weird,
That I can get no solace in this eird,
And yee your selfe, mother als well yee ken,
What ill occurses to want pleasure of men,
And I had rather drinke water for a yere,
Then I so long pleasure of men forbear.
The mother said, Daughter, for my blessing,
Bide while thou proue or tempt him with some thing
For your blessing, shee said, I will doe more,
But hit to proue I pray you to declare.
In what fassion, or what way it may bee,
Shee said, Daughter, that shall I hastelie.
In your Orchard there is a tree that stands,
The maike thereof they say is in few lands,
In which your Spouse hath great loue and liking,
Await some day when hee goes to the hunting,
Cause the same tree incontinent bee cuttit,
And bzing it home ere euer your husband wit it.
Thereof

The seven Sages.

Thereof make fire against his comming hame,
Then if yee scape without reproue or blame,
At your pleasure then may wee take the Priest,
This yee will doe for your mothers request.
She said, mother, your counsell I will doe,
Howbeit in trueth I am right loth thereto.
Each one home past vnto their owne ludging,
The Knight marueilde of his wifes tarying.
Shee said, Good sir, as I went West the street,
With my mother on chance there could I meete:
She ask'd me if yee were in gladnes.
I said, Euen so, and then home did mee dresse.
After dinner the Knight went in hunting,
But his good wife thought on another thing,
And thought that her purpose should come to end,
Incontinent for the Gardener shee send,
Whom to shee said, Cut downe this tender tree,
That I thereof may make on hastelie
A great warme fire against my Lords comming,
Hee will with speed come home from the hunting,
This day is slowe, so wonder sharpe and cold,
And as yee know hee is feeble and olde:
When hee comes home that hee shall not want fire
Therefore cut downe, and yee shall haue your hire.
To whom hee said, Saue your pleasure Madame,
Cut wee this tree, but doubt wee shall get blame,
For your husband far better loues this tree,
Ten times ouer, then all the trees heere be:
But not the lesse, Madame at your desire,
Other fallen wood I shall get to make fire.

Whithere

The seven Sages.

Whereof, my Lord (quoth hee) will stand content,
Nay, nay, (said shee) cut downe incontinent,
Hee said no way this tree I will destroy,
For it will put my Master to great noy.
Shee hearing that hee would not doe command,
The Gardners Are shee hint into her hand,
The tender tree shee cutted at the root,
That from thenceforth it should neuer haue fruite,
Caused seruants the samin home to beare,
Of her husband thereof taking no feare.
The Knight at Cuen from hunting comming hame,
Hunting the wild in Forrest with the same,
His wife him met and said, god Sir I know,
Ye are wearie and wonder cold with awo,
I caufde to big a fire to you therefore,
To make you cheerie and merie bee the more,
I thanke you Dame (said hee) withall mine heart,
Get I god Cheare, then yee shall haue your part.
Then in hee came, and late downe on a binke
Before the fire, and cride to get him drinke,
Which in all haste to him right sone was brought,
And thereof dranke gladlie while hee good thought,
In the meane time the smell perceiued hee,
Of the young plant and best beloued tree,
So him hee calls the Gardner right sone.
And said, Wilt thou what hast thou to mee done?
Tell I perceiue my plant burne in the fire,
Therefore at mee thou hast not seru'd thine hire,
Hee said, My Lord, it is true that yee tell,
None did that turne but your owne wife her sell,

The seven Sages.

Then said the Knight, I know that cannot bee,
That mine owne wife would doe such thing to mee,
For well shee knew, that treë I loved best
By twentie fold then I did all the rest.
I know shee would neuer consent theretill,
Because shee knew, that it was not my will,
Shee said, Good Lord, I crie you hère mercie,
For it was I that cutted downe the treë:
Knowing right well, yee were wearie forgone,
Cold, weake and tyde, and good fire had wee none,
And I did it your courage to refresh,
To make you blith, and to comfort your flesh.
That was the cause this fire I caused to make,
Onelie for you, and for none others sake.
When the Knight heard it was the samin treë,
Unto his wife hee said right angerlie,
O wicked wife how durst thou bee so bold,
To cut the treë that I on no wise wold,
Should beene cut downe for great riches and rent
I make a vow you shall it soze repent,
And knowing well I lou'd it all the best,
You haue mee made a fault right manifest.
When that shee saw her husband discontent,
Then shee began to weepe and als lament.
On fained sort her selfe for to excuse,
At suchlike time as woman oftimes does.
Sir I did it for your vtilitie,
And you it take againe so crabbedlie,
For I beleened to win therethrough good deed.
And now I get great malogrie to my need,

The seven Sages.

For if that I doe euer for the best,
Heuē reward I get ay readiest,
Had rather be burnt into a cole,
Then for good mind such outrage for to thole?
Then she began to weepe and make mourning,
Incontinent the Knight that perceiuing,
And so at short was moued with mercie,
And said, my joy, your mourning now let be,
In time comming, see that you not me moue,
To displeasure, nor hurt the thing I loue:
Wherefore beware the daies of your lifetime,
That neuer againe you commit such a crime,
As for this time, so I forgiue you clene,
Cease, weepe no more, be still and drie your eie:
Then the next day she went to Church againe,
Met her mother, whom of she was right fane,
Good Mother Mother (quoth she) with heart & brest,
How well enough faith I may loue the Priest,
And I haue done, euen as ye counsell'd me,
Mine hands cut down his best beloued tree,
To your counsell I did into all thing,
But fra he saw, that I made such mourning,
He cherish't me, and hath forgiven me quite:
Wherefore Mother, put me not in the wite,
Howbeit I loue the Priest with all mine heart,
For my good man he keepest me not a part,
The mother said, though old men once forgiue,
In time comming after if ye them grieue,
They will truely panse the next fault againe,
And punish it: perchance with double paine.

The seven Sages.

My counsell is, tempt him another tide.
Alas mother (quoth she) I may not bide:
For I suffer more paine for you same Priest,
Then I can show, or thinke into my brest,
Appardone me my sweet mother therefore,
Of your counsell now I will take no more.
The mother said, for the loue ye should haue
To me, because my corse did thee conceaue:
In my bosome as a babe did thee beare,
And for the blessing of thy father deare,
In this behalfe yet tempt him once againe,
If ye get quite, then I forgine you plaine,
To loue the Priest, or anie that ye please.
She said, that tale to me doth great dease,
From my pleasure for to remaine so long,
Forsooth mother, ye are farre in the wrong,
Neuerthelesse for my fathers blessing,
Yet once againe I shall giue him tempting,
How it shall be first ye must to me show,
All the fashion I pray you let me know.
Your husband hath (quoth she) a little hound,
He will not cosse for manie marke and pound,
He loues so well, that nightlie in his bed,
He makes his couch, and with fine meat is fed,
With your owne hands see yee the same hound kill,
Before his Cine: so he may wit right well,
This being done, be ye not punisht than:
Goe loue the Priest or any other man:
I giue you leaue, I shall you neuer blame,
So it be not to your great sinne and shame.

The seven Sages.

The said, mother, I will your counsell do,
At this present what ye will charge me to:
For there is not a bairne I wot liuand,
So faine would keepe of mine age the command
Of her parents, and now withoutten skaith,
I will obtaine the blessing of you baith:
And now mother, remember in your thought,
For your blessing, I doe else would I nought:
And then she said, my sweet mother, adew,
What thought I haue, I pray God if ye knew.
Then came she home, and put off as she might,
That longsome day while it came to the night:
And so at Euen commanded that her bed,
With purple clothes, and silk should be overspred:
Which the seruants at her command haue done,
With costlie clothes the bed they spred it sone.
And when the bed was thus at readie made,
The litle hound thereon hath him down laid,
As his custome it was and consuetude,
Als the good wife knew well that he would dudge,
And vp she rose with mind malicious,
With hatefull heart, and vult right venemous,
By the heind heills this hound then she did take,
And all his hairnes out on the wall she strake,
Saying, what deuill doth this tike on our bed,
That is so rich, and all with silke ou'rspred.
When the knight saw his little hound was slaine,
From crabednes no way he could refraine,
But to his wife with angrie heart can say,
Wicked woman out of my sight away,

The seven Sages.

How could thou finde into thy cruell minde,
To slay the hound that to me was so kinde?
And ou't all hounds with mine heart was loued:
O wicked wife, O hound thine heart hath moued,
To doe such thing, and me to yre increase,
O curst catiue, woe to thy cruelnes.
She said, Goodman, haue ye not right well seene,
How this foule tyke with his feet so vncleane,
Upon our bed hath lyen and fylde the same,
Haue you pleasure thereof, or any game,
Foule traiked tykes vpon our bed to lie?
Though ye please so, the same yet please not I,
To spill our bed that is so p'ecious,
Couer'd with clothes so cleane and curious:
With his foule feet new come out of the mire,
I rather burnt the bed and all in fire.
Then said the Knight with an angrie visage,
Knew thou not well that I had great courage
Into a leish my hound for to seele,
A hundreth times, then lying in my bed?
I rather giuen all my horse where they stand,
Ere ye had tane such wicked deed in hand:
Then when she saw the Knight so discontent,
And in some part raised in matalent:
To weepe and waile in all haste she began,
Saying, alas, that euer I knew a man,
For when I was into my virgines flowres,
I knew no thing of such sharp winter howres,
For any tike in this sort to be shored,
Quicke in my graue I had rather be smored,
For all that I for the best doe pretend,

The seven Sages.

Yee ay alledge that therein I offend.

Howbeit my minde bee euer true and good,

I get no thanks, thus shortly I conclude,

Then this olde Knight perceiuing the great care,

Weeping, mourning, with ruthfull heart and soze,

As hee beleeu'd, hee said, let bee such thing.

And at this time you make no moze mourning,

I pardon you vnder protestation,

In time comming yee make no such occasion.

Yee soz to moue to anger and to yre:

For if yee doe at sometime I will tire

Yee know right well yee cutted downe my Tree,

And now at short yee haue causde mine hound die,

Doe not suchlike, I heartlie you desire,

For if yee doe, no moze I can forbear:

To punish you for all that is gone by,

To the vttermost, remember well say I:

Therefore beware, make mee not discontent,

At you no moze, and so to bed they went.

So on the mozne at time by soone shee rose,

With merie minde, and put on all her clothes,

Went to the Kirke, and so her mother met,

Belœuing well of her good leeu to get,

To loue the Priest, and file her husbands bed,

But as God would, such thing was nothing sped,

They hailed other as they thought to bee done,

And in talking together they fell sone:

Shee said, Mother, too long for your request,

I haue the loue forlæted of the Priest:

For now I haue tempted mine husband twise.

The leuen Sages.

Hanged bee I when I that tempt him thise:
By your command a great thing I haue done,
By my conceit manie stages abone.
For as ye bade I cutt d downe his tree,
And now latellie I causde his good hound die,
And both these faults hee hath forgiven mee quite,
In time coming to mee ye put no wite:
With all my mind and heart within my brest,
In all good haste I will goe loue the Priest.
The mother said, I pray thee Daughter deare,
With patience two words thou wouldst mee heare:
It is knowne with mee then I can tell,
That ay old men are right sic and cruell:
And will thinke on vpon faults done before,
Notobeit some time they will not chide nor thore
For it is said, and als right well I wat.
That crueltie is ay appropziat,
To eldering Knights that in youth haue beene keene
Then in their eild they turne to tray and teene,
And for some fault will punish with rigour,
As they in mind it takes in displeasure:
Yet my counsell therefore I would thou did,
And thereafter I shall thee not forbide:
Loue where thou likes, or whom thou likes to loue,
There is mine hand I shall thee not reprove:
Yet tempt him once, as wee can best deuise,
For it is said, that all things thriues but thise,
Shee said, Mother. I heare you talke in vaine,
Knew yee the thought and nightlie burning paine
That I suffer continually in heart,

I wote

The seuen Sages.

I wote yee would not take my contra-part.
Yee were, mother, a woman as I am,
What would yee say if yee wanted the game
Of my father, that nightlie you doe broke,
For a new loue but doubt soone would yee looke,
With all your pith the same yee would purchase,
And haue the same with all your businesse:
Into this case now put your minde to rest,
To loue the Priest good faith I thinke it best.
Shee said, Daughter, for the great paine and cure,
I had of thee that time when I thee bure,
And for the food thereof which that thee fed,
I thee beseech fyle not thine Husbonds bed,
While the third time, I pray thee him to proue,
As thou wilt haue my blessing and my loue,
Deny mee not this sober small petition,
And I promise thee here a sure condition,
I shall forth set and further thine intent,
To thy pleasur and als intendement,
And neuer say that thou hast done amisse:
My sweet daughter I pray thee grant mee this,
As thou wilt haue my blessing and on thy bones,
My small desire I pray thee grant mee once.
The Daughter said, Mother, I you declare,
The matter is to mee so sad and sare,
That I may not so long absent therefra,
Yet not the lesse so inwardlie yee pray,
For the great charge first that yee say to mee.
And then againe yee haue promise truelie,
Into this case to further forth my cause.

The seven Sages.

If I had need, the righteous God it knowes:
Therefore shew mee the maner and the way,
How I shall tempt him to the third effray.
The mother said, On Sunday next command,
I know right well the minde of your Husband,
To haue vs all to dine is his intent,
With many friends, that none bee there absent,
With diuers moe good men of this citie,
Then when yee are at all your Majestie.
With all your meates well serued at the Table,
At the boord-head to sit yee are right able,
A key yee shall into the boord-cloth knit.
Which at your belt doth hing not latting wit,
That yee did so, but that it comes on chance,
Saying plainefoozth with a faire countenance.
Yee may percelue so forgetfull a wife
As I am now I trust bee not on life.
In my chalmer, my knife I haue forget,
Fozce I must rise, the same againe to get:
Then shall yee rise with a faird hastelie,
No man knowing where that yee knit your key.
So it beeing knit in the boord cloth fast,
Then all the meat and table downe yee cast.
On this fashion all your meat shall bee spilt,
With displeasure, and all your napzie gilt:
Yee doing so, unpunisht if yee bee,
To loue the Priest faith heere I make you free,
Shee said, for once your counsell shall I prieuue.
But neuer againe so long as I may liue,
For your counsell I haue done far ou'r might,

And

The seven Sages.

And so either at other toke good night.
Within few daies the feast was prepared
Aboundantly, and for no cost they spared,
The father, mother, and friends of honestie
On euerie side, were called there to be.
The table couer'd, and all set downe to dine,
The meat is come right delicate with wine:
All being set as it coulpe best effere:
The good-wife cride each man to make good chere:
At the boord-head she set her owne selfe down,
Her mother perceiued well the fashon,
What her daughter would doe, right well she knew,
Belæuing well the same that she would reu,
So the good-wife a bonie litle key,
Hang at her belt, she knit right quietly:
That none perceiu'd, nor knew her sie intent,
But thus she said to all that was present,
If I be wise, now may ye all perceauē,
In my chamber my knife forgote I haue,
Which I must fetch, and with a faird bypse,
And with a tit toke with her the boordclothes,
The table tirred, and all the meat downe flang,
Alas she said, faith now I haue done wrong,
I soze repent that I so shortly rose,
The meat is spilt and fylde are all the clothes,
The Knights colour changed into his face,
And smilde for scozne that so occur'd the cace:
And suffred ou'r with blith dissimulacō,
To treat his ghuests with a fair countenance:
And commanded a new table to be set,

The seven Sages.

With new nappie and other courses get,
And prayde his guests for to be blyth and glad,
Howbeit his table was reckleslie down laid.
Incontinent fresh meates was brought anone,
To new dinner with gladnes are they gone,
For all things done, not mouing him nothing,
And to his wife an euill word not saying.
Making good cheare to all the companie,
With merines welcomming them gladlie.
But her mother, knowing well the intent
Of her daughter was wonder discontent.
The dinner done they thanked all the knight,
And als his wife, and bade them both good night.
On the next mozne the knight he earelie rose,
In name of God, first to the kirke he goes.
And after he had his deuotion done,
To a Barbour but tarie he past soone,
Saying, Master, ye are goodlie expert,
In blood-letting, or insight in that arte:
He said, good sir, I am expert truelie,
Of euerie beine within a mans bodie,
I know right well, or yet into a woman,
In drawing blood thereof great craft I can.
Then said the knight thereof I am content,
Come on with me, and ye shall haue payment.
So the Barbour home with the knight he went,
And by the way he told him his intent:
And so they came vnto the knights ludging,
Where his wife lay soone they got entering,
He said, good Dame, get vp, for ye must rise,

Quoth

The seven Sages.

Quoth she, good sir, forsooth it's not the guise,
So soone to rise, say ye that for a mocke?
It is scarce yet nine houres of the clocke.
Then said the Knight, rise vp for your owne good,
On both the armes ye must be letten blood.
She said, good sir, since my mother me bare,
Blood of me was latten neuer mare:
And now thereof since I want consuetude,
I haue no will for to be latten blood.
Then said the Knight, forsooth ye are the war,
To let you blood so long that ye defer:
Thinke ye not on what fault ye haue made me?
First ye helw'd down my noble plant and tree,
Which ye knew well that I lou'd all the best,
And then ye know how that mine hound ye drest,
And yester day our friends being present,
At the table so cruellie me shent:
If I suffer that ye doe the fourth wrang,
In consuetude and vse so will ye gang.
Within short time ye shall me so constrain,
To vtter shame that I can not refraine
My selfe from shame, without I find remead,
And I find well some fault is in your head,
Of corrupt blood, that must be letten out,
And als wild blood in your bodie but doubt:
That from thenceforth ye shal no moze beare blame
For anger me, nor yet put me to shame:
He causde seruants but anie moze abade,
In the chamber a great fire to be made.
She seeing that, she thought without remead,

Into

The seven Sages.

Into that fire soz to be burnt is dead,
Then cride she loud, soz Gods grace grant mercie,
And I promise you one thing faithfullie,
In all my daies I shall you neuer grieve.
So this on time that ye will me relieue.
And haue pitie, I grant I did trespasse:
Therefore good sir, mercie at you I aske.
Then said the Knight by him that mercie made,
Streach ye not forth your arme but moze abade,
Where I intend of your blood to haue part,
I shall haue all the heart-blood at your hart.
To the Warbour also he said in plaine,
See that ye cut a great hole in the veine,
Or by Saint George the same thing ye shall haue,
For your reward, that she should now receaue:
The Warbour seeing he gote so soze a charge,
He made a wound that was both deepe and large,
On that one arme while that the blood ran down,
Abondantly and with great effusion:
Which soz to stanch the Knight would nothing thole
But rather bade moze larger make the hole,
Unto the time he saw her change colour,
That wound to stanch he charged the Warbour,
And bade him strike into that other arme,
Als great a wound whereof he thought no harme.
She said, husband, haue mercie now on me,
I am so weake, I trust shortly to die.
Then said the Knight, ye should haue thought on this
Once twise, and thrise, when ye committed mis,
Which causeth me, right soze against my will,

The leuen Sages.

Of your wild blood so much to see you spill,
For I sure you here liues not vpon life,
That would haue drawne so much blood of my wife
Except my selfe thereto had giuen consent,
But doubt that one of vs should soze repent,
But at this time your owne light wilfulnes,
Hath caused mee on this manner you dresse,
For yee haue done such wicked turnes thre,
Wherefoze but doubt now punisht thou must bee,
Then the Barbour causde her lay sooth on bzed,
That other Arme that hee might cause her bleed:
And then hee strake vpon the other side,
Into her Arme a wound both deepe and wide,
While that the blood abundantlie ran downe,
That all beleu'd that shee should fall in swoun
With a weake voyce shee cride right piteously,
My swete husband haue pitie now on mee,
For I beleene because I am your wife,
I can not that I should lose my life.
Then said the Knight to the Barbour againe,
I thinke it best that yee now stanch yon veine,
Now presentlie no more yee let it bleed.
The Barbour said, so shall I sir indeed:
That beeing done, the Knight hee gaue command,
To his seruants that they should soone fra hand,
Put her in bed, that shee may get some rest.
The Barbour said, Good sir I thinke it best.
Then bade hee her remember in her minde,
In time bygone how ill shee was inclinde,
And misse amend, or I heght by the rood,

With

The seven Sages.

Doe yee not so I shall see your heart blood.
Then the Barbour at this good eldering knight,
Receiv'd his wage, and at him tooke goodnight,
Then the servants in minde they thought it best,
Their owne Husie to put her to some rest:
So in her bed they happed her easilie,
When they beleu'd nothing but her to die,
Shee being laid softlie into her bed,
Heavie at heart, right faint and all feebled,
A damsell shee bade in all the haste,
Fetch her mother ere shee yielded the Ghost:
Who in all haste that to her mother told,
Your Daughter soone the spirit shee will bygald,
If yee come not I save to you truelie.
Shee is so faint, wee frow all shee shall die:
When the mother inquired secretlie,
What was the cause of her infirmitie,
The Damsell to her the passion said,
Whereof the mother was both blith and glad.
That her Daughter so trimlie was corrected:
Howbeit that she the same not suspected:
So on shee came vnto her Daughters place,
To consider the passion and the case:
And as soone as shee heard her mother speake,
My swet mother, said she, I you beseeke,
To set you downe and rest at my bed-head,
For I beleue nothing but onelie dead.
Of my bodie so much blood I haue bled,
That I on force behooued to take bed.
Thzough verie fault and febleness of blood,

That

The seven Sages.

That of my life I trow to bee denude.

The Mother said, My sweete Daughter and deate,

Told I you not a word was not in weete,

That ay old men was sharp and bitter fell,

Right outrageous, despitefull and cruell.

Howbeit sometime a fault they may ou'rsee,

Yet at the last they would it punish hie,

My Daughter now a question I will speere,

Howbeit yee bee right weake and lying heere:

Tell mee the trueth, and open to mee your brest,

In time comming if yee will loue the Priest:

Who said againe, Mother, alas let bee,

A world's shame take all the Priests for mee,

The high vengeance of the great God aboue,

Not quell them all. ere I one of them loue:

But mine husband that is both deare and sweet,

There is no man in world for mee so meet,

The Mother said, Why should yee haue despite,

At the pooze Priest, or giue him any wite?

For I beleue your minde hee neuer knew,

For in such case hee did you not persew,

But well I know, what thing was causde you duce

The wantonnes and abundance of blood,

Which I beleue at this time now yee want,

For yee behoou'd haue some thing you to dant,

Mother said shee, I pray you let mee rest,

Above all men mine husband I thinke best.

The Master then said to the Emperour,

Air, haue yee tane this tale well in order,

And considred thereof the morall sense,

The ſeuē Sages.

The Emperour ſaid, Maſter, by my conſciencie,
It is the beſt, and verie liefull tale,
That I haue heard this manie yēre but ſale.
To her husband ſhe did ſhewed turnes thre:
Firſt ſhe cutted this noble tender tree:
Then ſlew his hound, which was but a dumb beaſt,
And then thirdlie miſſaſhioned all his feaſt.
If hee had thold the fourth for to beene done,
It ſhould haue brought him to confuſion ſone.
The Maſter ſaid, I counſell you hereſore,
Looke to your wiſe, giue her credence no more.
Slay yee your ſonne (for her words) vnoffended,
Yee ſhall forthinke when yee can no way mend it:
The Emperour ſaid, I ſay to you truelie,
My ſonne this day for your ſake ſhall not die:
The Maſter ſaid, I thanke your noble Grace,
That for my ſake hath pardoned him ſuch ſpace,
So toke his leue, as could him well effere,
And ſo homeward to his owne houſe could ſpere:
Ere we proceed now to the Emprice tale,
Some we will talke of the Doctors but ſaile.

M O R A L I T A S.

YEe may perceiue now by this tale,
Good counſell is of great auaile,
Who it will take it well in head:
From vice to vertue it ſhall him lead,
And ay be rulde with a good reed,
This is forſooth but ſaile,

Good counſell is a precious thing,

Either

The seven Sages.

Either to Emperour or King,
It lats all thing for to goe wrang,
The King nor Emperour neuer rang,
Who if they want good counsell lang,
With rule they shall not ring.

All great perils it sets aside,
With wisdome it doth all provide;
God it grants to all degrees,
But many so fast from it flees,
While they be set vpon their knees,
They haue no grace to guide.

This young woman had sore offended,
If her mother had condescended,
To her daughters vnwise conceat,
In her contrare she made debate,
And causde her goe another gate,
Good counsell so defended.

The mother was great to allow,
That causde her daughter to her bow,
Through good counsell once twise and thrise,
Saying, Daughter, see thou be wise,
Take not in hand such enterprise,
Except thou it avow.

And so by counsell of her Dame,
She continued her glaiked game,
Howbeit she rang in ramping rage,
Good counsell causde her to asswage,
While that the Barbour for his wage
Made her meeke as a Lambe.

say ye not but it was despite,

The seven Sages

First cut the tree, the hound to smite,
Then cast the rable so reckleslie,
How can she well excused be,
She was witelesse a litle wie,
Wantonnes had the wite.

And heat of blood was abundant,
Whereof some part she might well want;
Her husband then tooke well in head,
How he thereof should get remead:
Where hote blood was he laid cold Lead,
And this wife could her dant,

So when her mother came to see,
Whether if she would liue or die:
Who said, Daughter for my request,
Now lay thine hand on thine owne brest;
And see if thou wilt loue the priest.
Cease, mother, let that be;

For had not bene your good counsell,
But recure I had shamed my selfe,
And as ye know, I was right thra,
For all your sawes to come therefra,
Now thanks to God it is not so,
Good counsell beares the bell.

The Priest of all this was witelesse,
Of my bawdrie and bruckelnes,
For he thereof neuer thing knew,
Nor I to him not such thing shew,
But was in purpose to perfew,
Therefore he was fakelesse.

Young women herefore in your flowres,

Though

The seven Sages.

Though ye thinke pride of paramours,
Take here example how I am,
And set aside such lawlesse game,
Orye shall fore repent the same,
The time was mine as youres.

Ye old men that are come to age,
Young women into mariage,
In no maner is for you meet,
They are wanton and full of heat,
To you is sowre that they thinke sweet,
And skant to get for wage.

Therefore in time ye should correct them,
With aw and labour ye should breake them.
Let them not brawle on euerie binke,
For as ye brew so shall ye drinke,
Perchance haue matter to forthinke,
And great cause to suspect them.

To this talking ye should take tent,
Or afterward ye shall repent.
When ye are made Iohn Thomsons man,
Then shall ye brawl, then shall ye ban,
And when remead none finde ye can,
But all with shame ouerspent.

Now are ye warnde, 7 bid adew,
We are to good where we are trew,
There is too few is faithfull found,
Some cuts the tree, some kills the hound,
Some casts the table to the ground,
As I did that I rew.

The feuen Sages.

A praise to the fourth Doctor.

LAud, honour, praise & thanks an hūdreth fold,
To thee Doctour, for the tale thou hast told,
That saued hath the childes life for a day,
And quenched hath the Emperours boast so bold,
In great malice: Who that but mercie wold
His owne sonne slaine, but thou him couldst say nay,
Though yon quick feind doth all that euer she may
To haue him slaine, but we shall all defy her,
Within few daies, on red warre we shall cry her.

The fifth tale of the Emprice.

THe Emprice hearing the child yet was not dead
A new conceat then tooke she in her head:
Thzough all the toun causede see in sundry airts,
The carriage horse that would draw waines & carts
And filled the same with euerie sort of geare,
Her ornaments and clothes that she should weare,
Made her to passe vnto her father hame,
Saying she would no longer thole such shame,
As she dayly did that all man might see,
And thereupon could not reuenged be:
Wherefore she would at her father seeke mends,
Whom on she said all her hope cleene depends,
The seruants so perceiuing her intent,
To the Emperour they shew incontinent:
Who past in hast to her but more processe,
Inquirde the cause of all such busines:
Where make ye to, oz whether will ye goe?

What

The seven Sages.

What is the cause that you are moued so?

Shee sayes, I will but any more delay,

To my Father the hie gate make the way,

Where I may haue both solace, mirth and game,

But now I haue the contrare of the same.

Therefore I must persue where I may get it,

For at this time yee cause mee now forget it.

The Emperour said, Will yee get more solace,

For bide with mee? I trow into no place,

For I had hope there was no man on life,

Was better lou'd then I with his owne wife.

Now I perceiue the verie cleane contrare,

That bownes away in other places to fare.

Shee said, My Lord, for that cause I depart.

For I loue you with so perfect an heart,

That I had rather of your death to heare tell,

Then bee present, and for to see't my sell.

Of your Masters yee take far more delite,

To heare their tales all told in my dispite,

That I am quite put forth of your credence,

For giue to them such inward attendence:

Therefore it shall chance you ere all bee gone:

Far worse then did vnto Octauiane:

Which this Empire, as yee now presentlie

Had for to guide, and died in miserie,

For was so false, and als so conetous,

That his subjects held him so odious,

They were constrainde for his great falsitie,

To eird him quicke for all his dignitie,

Because each man so conetous did him hold,

The seven Sages.

They yeat his mouth full of hote melted golde,
To whom (quoth hee) let not such thing bee said,
That of falsset the blame to mee bee laid:

Shee said, But doubt the blame lyes all on you,
For day by day all time yee cause mee trow,
Your sonne should die, and yet hee liuing is,
And well yee know that hee did a great mis,
Wherefore belæue that euermore from hence,
In that behalfe I giue you no credence.

The Emperour said, it becomes not a King,
Without counsell to discusse euerie thing:
And in speciall for to giue iudgement,
On mine owne sonne without good auisement,
Wherefore Madame, I pray you heartfullie,
That yee would shew some example to mee,
Wherthrough I may my realme with wisdom guide
And to my selfe an easie life prouide.

Shee said I will some storie to you shew,
Whereby ye may well and perfectlie know,
To rule your Realme and hold your selfe perfite:
So yee will make you of seven Masters quite,
Of their counsell yee are too couetous,
And of their tales you are too desirous:
Yet not the lesse my tale sooth shall I say,
But if yee please, the sentence beare away.

BEfore our dayes there was both heard and seene,
Kings & Emperours into this town hath bene,
Among the rest, I remember on a one,
Which was called to name Octaviane,

The seven Sages.

So conetous as hēe was to win gold,
I ueuer read one foꝛmed on the mold.
The Citizens that time as I heard say,
They had great warres with all about them lay,
And all nations right cruellie they danted,
Where they tribut oꝛ anie manred wanted:
While that it come to such hote point of weere,
That all nations in their contrate did stee.
In that meane time there was a Master clarke,
Dwelling in Rome right cunning in his woꝛke,
Called Virgill, the which in Arithmeticke,
Hee was so slye that no man was found like
The Citizens this Clarke they did require,
That hēe would woꝛke and win from them god hire
To find some way by his craft and cunning,
Foꝛ to ingraue some image oꝛ such thing,
Of his practicke, ingine, oꝛ industrie,
Subtle Science, oꝛ yet Specromancie.
Whereby that they might haue perfect knowledge,
When enemies to warfare made voyage,
And to eschew from all aduersitie,
And set foꝛward their owne prosperitie,
Whereby they might prouide their purueyance,
To good oꝛ ill whether that it did chance.
The Citizens then with this cunning Clarke,
Made one accord, and so sell to his warke.
Within the Towne hēe builded bp a Towre.
Of a great height, and als of great valour,
And set vpon the samine towers head.
Great images of Tin, of Brasse, and Lead:

A great

The seven Sages.

A great number by their owne descriptions,
As manie as in the world Regions.
In the mids of that samin Towre of height,
A great image hee set to all mens sight:
And in the hand it bare a golden ball,
As it should beene the master of them all,
And eachone of the rest had by them sell,
Into their hand a litle ringing bell.
And turn'd their face to the same Region
To them assign'd, and tooke dominion:
If anie Realme and Region shp would rise,
In contrare Rome, or rebell anie wise,
Then that image to any each Region,
It had respect or yet dominion,
Would moue the face, and also ring the bell,
And them to warne it would not faile to tell.
Then the Romanes ere anie foes wilt:
That rebellion they rose for to resist.
And armed them in all the feates of wære,
As them became, or to them could effære.
And so small land there was in Christendome
But by that way was made subject to Rome.
Wherethrough they wan great worshop and honours
Du'r all the world they were cal'd Conquerours,
This being done, this poble cunning Clarke,
In Romes towne hee made another warke,
Which was a fire continuallie burning.
Both night and day, and neuer had slockning,
To the people, being a great comfort,
Solace and mirth, blythnesse and meekle sport:

The seven Sages.

Two bathing Fats he made within the town,
To the Commonitie great consolatioun.
The one was cold, preparte for Summer season,
The other hote for Winter, which was reason:
If any man his body would refresh,
Passe to the one, therewith he might him wesch:
Betwixt these bathes and this continuall light,
A image made of great stature and height,
With such ingine so long as there it stood.
The fire should burne, and als the bathes doe good.
In whose forehead was written with letters fine,
Who strikes me downe great treasure they shal finde
And moze attour it may fall such a chance,
When they haue done to take a great vengeance,
This image was made with such craftines,
While that it stood and tholed no distresse,
The fire lasted, and neuer moze went out,
The two bathes stood in their own ply but doubt,
While at the last a cunning Clarke past by,
And this image perfectly could espy,
The Writing read, and to himselfe he said,
What like vengeance can on a man be laid,
Or what treasure may any man now finde,
That strikes thee down, or puts thee to ruine?
But I beleue rather hid that there be,
Under thy feet some great summes of money,
Some rich Jewells of gold, or some treasure,
That thou art so set vp with such honour:
This I beleue, and is the likeliest,
And so at short that image down he kest,

The seven Sages.

To that effect some treasure to obténe:
But none he gote, because none there had béene:
But so soone as that image fell but doubt,
Incontinent the fire was quenched out,
The bathes two were vanisht out of sight,
Did neuer good, noz after had no might,
The pooze people hereof was verie sozie,
That they were so destitute of glozie:
Both of their bathes, and of their lasting light,
Which to them did great comfort day and night,
Saying echone with loud voice to the aire,
Curst mot he be for now and euermaire,
That vs so quite of comfort hath made cléne,
That we so long in consuetude haue béene,
For his pleasure and profite singulare,
More be to him with sturt and méekle care,
Yet not the lesse there treasure gote he none,
And our pleasure all quite away is gone:
In this meane time was liuing Kings threé,
To whom Romanes had done great villanie,
By great murther and malice them molest,
With cruell warres and slaughter them opprest:
On whom they would right faine reuenged béene:
So to counsell these threé Kings did conuene,
With their Barons, their Lords and their Knights
And other men of great wisdom and might,
How that they might on Rome reuenged be,
For their slaughter and their great villanie,
Unto them done in diuers times bywent,
And could no wise on them get assithment.

When

The seven Sages.

When diuers daies they had at counsell borne,
Some of them said, this anales not a praine:
Their might is far aboue all our puissance,
Therefore we thinke some other conueyante,
We must attempt, and new conceats consider,
Therefore let all our wits now goe together.
Then foure old Knights that was of counsell good,
Besore these Kings and Lords by they stood:
Saying these words, we thinke we worke in vaine,
On this matter so long for to remaine:
For truely it is, while their great towre bystands,
With images and bells into their hands,
Which warnes them when anie Region will rise,
In their contrare then passe they to deuise
Remead theretoze, what land against them steres,
With all defence and cruell feat of wæres,
So we must run vpon an other boord,
Eschew the dæpe, and cast vs to the foord.
Then said the Kings, what thinke ye best to doe?
Quoth they, please ye our counsell to stand to:
So that ye will thereon to make the coste,
We shall you please, or els our heads be lost.
Then said the Kings, for coste doe ye not spare.
Therefore ye shall be answered. and far mare.
Then said the Knights, the matter standeth thus,
Octaviane ye know is couetous,
And loueth gold ye know, aboue measure:
Therefore he must be blinded with treasure,
The sight of gold will make him so inclind,
To all our sawes, he hath gold so in minde,

Packed

The seven Sages.

Packed full well foure punshions to the head,
Ye must furnish of coined gold so red:
With good conuoy and orderly expense,
While that we get the Emperours presence.
This being done, get ye not your intent,
We shall all foure fine liues, lands and rents.
The King said, goe to, it shall be done:
They made forward, the gold was gotten soone,
Foure full punshions of gold that was so bright,
To Romes town they brought within the night,
No man knowing what there within was closed,
To their purpose when they thought them disposed:
These foure punshions into foure sundrie airts.
In Romes town they hid at diuers parts:
Some in full seas, in draw Wells, and in dikes,
Low in the earth and some they sanke in sikes.
This being done, they came in right quietly,
To their Hostage, and lay down priuily,
And on the morne at time of day they rose,
With good intent, and to the Palace goes:
And so belue as they past bp the stræt,
It chanced them the Emperour soz to meet:
They hailed him with reuerence as effæred,
Againe at them right patiently he spæred,
From whence they came, oz what seruice could do,
To what Science they were most able to:
Who answered him into their best maner,
From far countries to your Grace commed hære:
We are Spa-men, sothslayers, and diuiners:
To serue your Grace, and als your counsellers,
And can discusse all dreames right cunningly,

The seven Sages.

And tell thereof the trueth and veritie:
And all hid geare that is put out of sight,
Wee can it finde, and thereto goe at right,
But our owne dreames, our crafts and als ingine:
Though it were hid a thousand yeres sine,
And wee haue heard that your grace hath pleasure,
In such behalves, and therein taketh cure,
And if your Grace at vs with such require,
Wee are readie to fulfill your desire.
By day or night into all kinde of sort,
With heart and minde your Grace for to comfort.
The Emperour then considering in his minde,
How these foute men to such things were inclinde,
And knew right well that into Romes Citie:
Great summes of Gold was hid right quietly,
Whereof hee could get no perfect knowledge,
Except such men as these hee had in wage:
So couetise and greedinesse of geare:
Pastie credence which all men should forbear.
Blinded his thought, and causde his wits suruey,
Causde him too soone to their bidding obey,
And so at short the Emperour is agreede
With these foure men and faithfullie them see'd
Whom to hee said, Good Sirs, I will you proue,
And if yee bee such men for my behoue,
As yee haue said, yee shall haue good rewarde,
Each one of you but doubt shall bee a Laird:
And entered with thanks into mine House,
Among my Lords with gifts full glorious.
They said againe, And please your Majestie

The seven Sages.

No more reward at your Grace couet wee,
But the one halfe of it wee doe obteene,
Under the earth as shall bee clearelie seene,
By our ingines, our dreames and our foresights,
Within few yeeres wee meane to mend our mights
The Emperour said, Goe doe as yee deuise,
Yee take on hand a wortheie enterprize,
Then said they all vnto the Emperour,
This night, my Lord, if it bee your pleasure,
To the eldest of vs for to grant leue,
His cleane cunning this samine night for to proue,
By his owne dreame what hee can comprehend,
And what thereof shall bee the finall end,
And thereafter wee shall in dayes three,
Shew to your Grace thereof the veritie
What it betokens, and what thereof shall come,
To your pleasure yee shall know all and summe.
The Emperour said, Goe to, I am content,
So toke good-night and all foure forth they went,
Merie in heart, right blith and verie glad,
So good answere that they obtained had,
Past forth that time in scozne and derision,
Beleeuing well the great towe to get downe,
Three dayes and nights, beeing past and compleet,
These foure kest them with the Emperour to meet,
The eldest said, And please your noble Grace,
To passe with vs, and wee shall shew the place,
Where that a Tun of red Gold lies hid,
The Emperour said, I will doe as yee bid.
Then hastelie, they came vnto the place,

The

The seven Sages.

The eldest said, And please your noble Grace,
As I beleue there is of gold so cleare,
A Tun strakefull in this place lying hère:
Euen so my dreame forsooth vnto you shew,
And I doubt not, but wee shall find it true.
Then all the foure to delue they tooke in hand,
And as hee said, right so the gold they fand:
Which gold befoze into that samine place,
Themselues had hid agoe, but a short space:
Yet not the lesse the Emperours fantasie,
Trow'd they had found the gold in veritie.
Which when hee saw, hee was right wonder glad,
With merie cheare vnto the foure hee said,
Of this found gold the one halfe yee shall haue,
The other halfe I shall cause to receiue.
The next dreamer said to the Emperour, —
Now falls to mee, if it bee your pleasure,
By night about to dreame if I can finde,
Anie more gold if some bee left behinde.
The Emperour said, God send you such furdzance,
As this same day your brother gote by chance:
The next night came, and likewise did the day,
The next Dreamer to the Emperour can say,
Hee of comfort, and if it please your Grace.
This night I dreamed of more gold in a place,
Which in short time your noble Grace shall know,
And God willing the same shall to you show,
And so hee did, whereof hee was right blith,
Whom to gladlie the Emperour said full swith,
Take your owne part, and I shall take the other.

The seuen Sages.

For yee haue done aswell as did your brother,
So did the thirde on the samine likewise,
Alswa the fourth tooke that same enterprize,
Eachone of them found to the Emperour,
A Tun of Gold with riches and treasure.
They caused the King to them giue confidence,
As they had found the gold by their science,
Themselues did hide that gold vnder the ground,
And caused all trow the same that they had found.
Th Emperour so with gold he was beguilde,
And with their slight and science was ou'rsilde.
Notwithstanding the one halfe hee them gaue,
So wise trusting that they should him deceaue:
And when either of them had tane their part.
The Emperour was right iocund in heart:
Hee them aduanc'd and said, they were most trewe,
Of sothslayers that euer yet hee knew.
And most expert into their owne Science,
That euer was by his intelligence,
They perceiuing the Emperour was content
Of their doings, they said with one consent,
O my Lord, wee haue each one our night about,
Dreamed our dreams, which ye haue heard but doubt
Of verie trueth and haue proued indeed:
Yet furthermore yee will thole vs proceed,
That wee all foure together dreame this night,
So shall our dreame haue the more strength & might
Wee trust if there within this citie be,
Any hid gold, great iewells or money,
Wee shall it haue by our dreames and ingine,
Though

The seven Sages.

Though it were hid a thousand yeeres sen sine:
Wherthzough your Grace shal be enrich'd with gold
That your compare shall not be in the Hold,
And we doubt not, but right well vnderstands,
That there is gold ten thousand of thousands,
Within the walles hid of this same citie,
Whereof but doubt god knowledge get shall we.
The Emperour said, goe to, I am content,
So that ye finde where there is gold and rent.
They tooke good-night all foure. and said, adew,
Except themselves was none there minds knew:
So on the mozne approaching the ninth houre,
They came all foure befoze the Emperour,
Whom to they said with goodly countenance,
My Lord, be blith, for we haue good tithance:
For we all foure haue dreamed this same night;
Into our sleepe we haue seene such a sight,
Of burning gold so wonder great plentie,
So much at once I troto few saw with eye,
Will ye suffer the samine to be sought,
To your profite but stay it shall be brought:
Then shall ye haue of gold such abundance,
That all the world for gold shall you auance.
Of the great towze (quoth they into the ground
All this riches of gold is to be found.
The Emperour said, the great God me defend,
To such a worke that I neuer intend,
The mightie towze where that the image stands,
For to put down with any mans hands.
Which was builded by Clarks so bounteous,

The seven Sages.

So done costly of summes so sumptuous,
Als warnes vs by their small bells ringing,
Of enemies if they be vprising.
Of all Regions either by far or neere,
If they pretend against vs to make waere:
Therefore I can by no way giue consent,
To steepe that towre for any gold or rent.
They said, my Lord, haue ye not found all trewe,
That we all foure in any sort you thewe.
He said, your wit and Science I commend,
And als your trueth therein I will defend,
Also your craft, your lawtie and honour,
But I can not consent to touch the towre,
Which is to vs great consolation,
I will not thole no wise to put it down.
They said, my Lord, will ye giue vs credence,
With out owne hands, and on our owne expence,
We shall not faile to obtaine the treasure,
And in no sort thereby to hurt the Towre,
Nor images, nor yet the bells that rings,
To saue all such we can doe sundrie things,
We shall doe it so quietly in the night.
None but we foure thereof shall get a sight.
If it be done on day light patently,
The people then should cry out openly,
And rumour rise out thzough the whole Region,
That ye for gold should the great towre break down.
We shall so work, that neither ground nor towre,
Shall thole distresse, or yet take displeasure.
The Emperour said, when all folkes are at rest,

The seven Sages.

To finde the gold goe doe as ye thinke best,
And I the morne shall come and visie you,
What gold ye get, and where ye worke and how,
Take there my ring for a token expresse,
Within the towre that ye get glad entresse:
These foure came on at Euen wher. it was late.
Unto the towre they make the neereſt gate:
Told the Captaine, the ring vnto him shew:
Who said to them, the ring right well he knew.
He them inquirde what was their great credence,
And they him shew the whole tale and sentence:
And so at short these foure fell to labour,
To pike and howke, and vndermine the towre,
While it had neither power, strength nor might,
Within threë daies vnſalne to ſtand vpriht.
This being done, on the third morne ere day,
They leapt on horſe, and priuily ſcale away,
To their own land with great blithnes and joy,
That found the caſt that great towre to deſtroy:
But ere they wan ſwath of ſight off the town:
They ſtood all foure, and ſaw the towre fall down:
So on the morne when all folke did vpriſe,
They ſaw the towre was ſalne on ſuch a wiſe,
The Senatours thereof they tooke diſcomfort,
And to the Emperour the faſhion could report.
And ſaid, good Lord, how hath occur'd this caſe,
That our great towre is ſalne in ſo ſhort ſpace?
Which dayly was our Watch, and comfortings,
Contrare our foes, and made vs ay warning.
He anſwerde them, to me there came foure men,

The seven Sages.

Whom of before I neuer did them ken,
And shew to me that they were Sotylayers,
But now I see that they are great deceiuers,
And sware for trueth and also to me shew,
By their dreaming where gold was hid, they knew,
And caused me trow within the towres ground,
A thousand million of red gold should be found:
And not hurting the towre nor yet image,
To doe the same I gaue them goodly wage:
And so to them I gaue too great credence,
Wherethrough is false great inconuenience.
They answer'd him for his great couetise,
Your greedines, and burning auarice,
And for your loue to gold, and great delite,
That ye thereof had such an appetite,
Shall we therefore all be destroyde at once,
Nay, the first wracke shall light vpon your bones.
But more procelle to the tolbooth him led,
And on his backe they cast him in a bed,
And pour'd his mouth, of melted gold there fow,
Saying to him, take thee enough of it now,
Thou coueted gold with so greedie desire,
Thou hast vs tint, and all the whole Empire.
For the great lust of gold which thou didst haue:
This being done, they put him quicke in graue,
For greedines of gold this was his end,
Which at his death a mite could not him mend:
Not long after came in these Kings three,
All in warfare, with a potent armie:
Knowing right well the towre was casten down,

And

The seven Sages.

And so they laid a great siege to the towne:
Which they ou'rcame, and cast down clean the wall
And so at short Rome was destroyed all.

¶ The Emprice said, haue ye tane well my Lord
These words in head that I now did record:
I thanke you forsooth therefore, Madame said hee,
For yee haue told a noble tale to mee:
Then could shee say, this towne with this image,
Betokens nought but your owne personage:
For looke so long as yee liue in this life,
There is no Kings that dare raise war or strife,
In your contrare, or yet within your land,
So long as yee are on life now liuand:
And that your sonne doth verie well consider,
With the counsell of the Masters together,
With their false tales and fained narration,
How they should finde the way to put you down,
Too great pleasure to heare them all yee haue,
And their mind is but doubt you to deceaue,
As these foure this towne to ruine brought,
These Masters so would bring you euen to nought.
And vndermine and cast you vnder foote,
This is the cause they daylie to you sute,
The images that so much money cost,
As your fine Wits, which they beleue is lost,
For so childish and soft they you perceaue,
The whole Empire from you so would they haue.
The Emperour said, that each tale that ye tell,
Perceauie well may be told by my sell:
Therefore they shall not make of mee the foure,

The seven Sages.

For yet change mee, as did that Emperour.
All is falsset that they deale with, I see:
Therefore the morne my sonne shall hanged bee.
The Empryce said, Will yee your sonne cause hang.
Yee shall bee blith, fare well, and als liue long.
So the next day the Emperour gaue command
To take his sonne, and hang him vp fra hand,
To the gallous as they were him leading,
The fift Matter came forth the way riding,
To the palace hee rod hard at the post,
For feare and dread that the childe should bee lost:
Who came lowlie befoze the Emperour,
And on his knees him hailed with honour:
He wride his face, and would not on him looke,
But at him hee great indignation tooke.
My Lord, hee said, it is not your honour,
My pooze hailing, to take in displeasure.
Why comming here (quoth hee) I couet nought,
For thine hailing, noz none that heere it brought.
For yee haue seru'd at mine hand all to die,
For displeasure, that yee haue done to mee.
Hee said, My Lord, I neuer did the deed,
Unto your Grace, to get such to my need.
As for your sonne: where yee say hee is dumbe,
We reckon that vnto your great wisedome,
As yee will see hereafter in few dayes,
As to your wife where shee alledges and sayes,
By her sayings, that hee would her haue shamed,
But doubt thereof hee ought not to bee blamed:
For well I wote, therof hee is witlesse,

The seven Sages.

As is my selfe, and of the same sakelesse:

Therefore, my Lord, such thing belæue yee nought,
For the contrare to light it shall bee brought.

For your sonne, to vertue is so inclinde,
I know such vice was neuer in his minde.

And if yee will for your wiues wilfull sawes,
Andoe your sonne without proesse of lawes,
It shall bee worse to you noz euer was,

To the Doctour, and cunning Hypocras,
That caused slay the Doctour Galiene,

His chosen deare Master in medicine.

The Emperour said, Master tell mee that tale,
Perchance it may for your cunning auaille.

The Master said, Cause call your sonne againe.

And all the sooth I shall shew you in plaine,

Unto your grace if I told my narration,

In the meane time your sonne should suffer passion.

The Emperour then hee causde his seruants pas,

And put his sonne in prison where hee was.

And so that day hee scaped from the gallous.

The Master then told forth his tale as followes,

The Masters tale ere wee seeke furthermare,

The Queens tale wee must something declare,

MORALITAS.

Alay ye not by this noble Queene,

That ay before so good hath beene,

That she her Lord false before his eie, said openly,

That hee of falsset was not cleane, read ye and see.

In the beginning of her last tale,

Where

The seven Sages.

Where hee should haue the honour hale,
Iudge yee if shee did to him faile, in her language,
To call a King so vilde a thing, with great outrage:

But women haue such condition,
When they are noy'de, to want reason:
They spowt then like a Scorpion by order cleene,
Because quite gone is descretion, as did this Queene,

Also the Emperour fare did faile,
Some hid condition of small auaille,
Which that hee had by his counsell, to their consent:
Forsooth a King should worke nothing but auisement.

So was seene of the casting downe,
Of the great towre in Romes towne:
Where hee made priuie compaction, that none did know,
With vncouth men of strange nation, as deed did shew,

Yee Lords and Lairds of great honour,
Doe not as did this Emperour,
Put all his hope into treasure, and great riches,
And lost his life within an houre, for greedinesse.

His greedinesse was so well kend,
That it went to the worlds end,
His foes whom to he did offend, gote wit expresse,
How his pleasure was on treasure, and greedinesse,

In haste they finde a quicke ingine,
Send him a subtile hid propine,
Which caused him his honour tine, in short processe,
And put all Rome to great ruine, for greedinesse.

For strangers came with their vaine wind,

And

The seven Sages.

And false flatterie made him so blind,
Such gold & treasure they should finde, through subtleneſſe
That they it ſaid, he was right glad for greedines.

They ſhew him they had ſuch ſcience,
In dreaming they had ſuch experience,
Of gold to get ſuch confluence, by buſineſſe,
But he gaue too haſtie credence, for greedines.

Which cauſeth much miſchiefe to be,
As we may well perceiue and ſee,
Gets moſt credence, who beſt can lie, through wickedneſſe,
Of halfe a tale they will make three, for greedines.

And can bring vp a tale of nought,
And ſay the thing that neuer was wrought,
For neuer ſaid nor neuer thought of wilfulneſſe,
Some giue it credence euen as it dought for greedines.

And euen ſo did this Emperour,
Gaue ſuch credence vnto theſe ſoure,
To furniſh gold and great treasure to his Highneſſe,
Gaue them leiuē to caſt down the towre for greedines.

Which euer was to ROMEs town,
Such comfort and conſolation,
If they thoght good to ſome Region they would them dreſſe
But yet the towre was caſten down for greedines.

It is a poyſonde peſtilence,
Or to giue too haſtie credence,
To a tale not worth audience, through haſtines,
The tale-teller then tines mence for greedines.

There

The seven Sages.

There is many moe then anew,
Will make a tale was neuer trew,
Yet they themselfes it neuer knew, but as they ges;
Some will say false, and after rew for greedines.

There is diuers tines their honour,
Their worship, riches, and pleasure,
Ofttimes in vaine makes great labour, with small increas,
And oft is ordred by good order, for greedines.

For greedines causeth great griefe,
Ennie, malice, and all mischiefe,
Many for mutton and for beefe, into mirkenes,
Is hanged like a common thiefe for greedines.

Therefore good firs, heartly I pray you,
Cast greedines aside from you,
With iocund minde passe and goe play you in merines;
There is no better charme for your greedines.

Now these three Kings when they did heare,
The towre whereof they stood in feare,
Was casten down but shield or speare through wilines,
In all haste made them to the war for greedines.

For first they found a wilie way,
For to put Rome in great effray,
And thought they would it first essay, to get entresse,
For they would make it their first pray for greedinesse.

Beliue they came and fiedgde the toun,
In all good haste the walles brake down,
And put themselfes in possession, with all blithnes,
And from the Emperour rest his crowne for greedines.

Now

The seven Sages.

Now, firs, this is the finall end,
To greedines who will pretend,
When they can not themselues defend by manlines,
Away with vengeance all doth wend for greedines.

There is two points into this tale,
Them to forbear is good and hale,
The first is greedines but faile of gold and geare,
Hastie credence oft brewes bale, these two forbear.

A reproach ro the Emprice.

O Catine Queene and cruell, and root of all mischiefe,
O false flesh saint & fruell, great grounder of all grieffe,
Wild rauenē shal riue thy beef, Wood dogs thy bones shal gnaw
Ere euer thou get reliefe, thy luddes shall thole the law,
We shall make all men know, and als perfectly see,
Thy deedes the trueth shall show, of thy bid barlotrie.

The tale of the fifth Master.

Befoze this time a Phisician there was,
A cunning Clarke, whose name was Hypocras,
Which in Phisicke and other high Science,
Du'r all other he had preheminence:
Als he had with him a kinsman of his own,
Called Galene whose cunning was well knowne.
All his ingine and cunning he did apply,
To learne Phisicke, and the same occupy,
As his Uncle at such times had befoze,
Wherewith he wan great honour, laude and gloze:
But inso much Galene was not so old:
Yet he excell'd his Uncle manifold,

The seuen Sages;

In Whisicke art, and into medicine,
He was moze sharp and quicker of ingine.
Then Hypocras perceauing in his heart,
That Galene in the craft was so expert,
Dreading therefore that he should him excell,
And from his gloze and profite him expell:
And therefore did as meekle as he might,
From Galene of the craft he hid the sight.
Then Galene well this thing he did perceauce,
Best him dayly the moze and moze to haue,
Of Whisicke art the moze he did obtaine,
On one day moze, than befoze in fiftene:
Whereby the Doctour tooke in his conceat,
That Galene should grow to greater estate:
Therefore at him he had lurking enuy,
Howbeit he had no quarrell cause nor why.
In this meane time the King of Hungarie,
Send his message with ships out through the sea,
For Hypocras that he might with him speake,
And cure his sonne which lay right wonder sicke.
So Hypocras the message did receaue,
Hartly praying the Messengers him to haue,
Some part excus'd vnto their noble King:
For he by age might make no traouelling,
But I shall send my Cousen and seruand,
What I will bid that will he take on hand.
So Galene obeyed his Uncles will,
And in all points the same he did fulfill,
And past his way vnto that noble King:
Who was right blith and glad of his comming:

The seven Sages.

But hee maruell'd why came not Hypocras,
Then Galene said, that old and weake hee was,
Might not trauell, for no trauell hee vsed,
Praying his Grace for to haue him excused,
And at that time had businesse adoe.
That he no way as then might win him to.
But in his stead hee hath mee to you send,
With helpe of God your sonne shall I amend.
Of the which thing the King was well content,
Galene with speed vnto the Childe hee went,
Felt his pulses, and als his brine saw,
Whereby belue his sicknesse hee did know.
Incontinent then past hee to the Queene,
And said, Madame, your sicke sonne I haue seene,
And I am come vnto your noble Grace,
Beseeching you to heare mee speake a space:
Take no disdain, though I now to you speake,
I came to heale your sonne that lyeth sicke.
Shee said, Good Sir, say on what pleases you,
For yee will say nought but the trueth I trow,
Hee said, Madame, tell on and make no lie,
Who is the father of yon sonne tell mee?
Who is father (quoth she) who but the King,
Quoth hee, Madame, there is not such a thing.
Will yee say so (quoth shee) for veritie,
Weis want the head I vow right hastelie,
Once I said els and yet I say againe,
The King is not his father in certaine,
I came not heere therefore to losse mine head,
Nor yet incurre in my fault any fead,

The seven Sages.

For I haue not deserued such reward:
Though I none get, nothing that I regard.
So to the Dore hee made him straight away,
The Queene that saw, and to him can shee say,
O good Master, if yee will keepe secree,
I will you shew, so yee discouer not mee,
Then Galene said, Madame, God mee defend,
But I so doe vnto my liues end:
Therefore to mee to shew the trueth bee bold,
For it againe shall neuermore bee told:
In greater thing your Grace so shall I please,
Your sonne make whole, and put him well to ease,
If yee so doe, good Master then shee said,
Wee will mee make right wonder blith and glad:
And good reward of mee so shall yee haue,
And of my Lord likewise yee will receaue.
Therefore heare mee while I haue said something,
Upon a time came to my Lord and King,
The King of Burbon to passe the time in sport,
What will yee more? to make my tale now short,
To you Master, as now I will not lie,
With mee hee gotte this Childe in priuitie,
Then Galene said, Feare not, and speake no more
The tale I know right perfectlie before.
Then to the Child hee past incontinent,
And him did cure with a right regiment.
What would he drinke, and what would be his meate
Water to drinke, and beefe daylie to eate,
So Galene then within dayes thre:
The child made whole of his infirmitie,

Withen

The seven Sages.

When that the King heard tell his sonne was free,
Of all sicknesse and of all maladie,
Unto Galene a good reward hee gaue,
But doubt from the Duene hee did receaue,
With speciall thanks and after ay credence:
So toke his leue, and homeward hee past hence:
When hee came home to his Cme Hypocras,
At Galene then but farie could hee as,
How is the child that yee past for to see?
Sir, hee is whole of all sicknesse said hee,
Then Hypocras desired him to conclude,
What hee him gaue to his drinke and his food,
Hee said, hee gaue him oren flesh to eat,
Water to drinke, this was his drinke and meat,
Then Hypocras to Galene said fra hand,
The mother is not true to her husband,
Then Galene said, Now Master, soth yee say,
With displeasure Hypocras past his way,
Said to himselfe with hatred and enuy,
Well I perceiue no man will set mee by,
Within short time hee no remeadie found,
But quite to nought my cunning is confound:
By his cunning hee shall not faile to be,
Praised in woakes ten times fare aboue mee,
And ere so were, vnlesse I found remead,
Rather I shall conspire my Cousens dead,
From that time forth Hypocras ay him drest,
How hee might get Galene dead and suppress.
In a morning Hypocras by can rise,
Past to his Earth, as his vse was and guise.

The seven Sages.

To Galene said with words faire and make.
Now let vs goe in our Garden to seeke,
Herbes to be salue that is of most vertew,
For as I with there is growing enew.
Master hee said, I am ready at hand,
What y^e please best, to doe as y^e command,
Hypocras said Take vp that Herbe so greene,
For it is full of vertue as I weene:
And so hee did at his Masters command.
He pulde the Herbe and gaue it in his hand,
And at his nose the sauour thereof did smell:
This Herbe (said hee) of Herbes beareth the bell:
Stoup downe againe and pull it by the roote,
Of it I shall both profite get and fruite.
For I know well it is right wonder good:
To cole feuer, or to stem running blood:
Als of vertue it is right comfourtive,
To heale all flure to any man on liue:
So Galene none euill hauing in minde,
To pull the roote lowly his head inclinde,
Which would not draw a long time with his hand
Then Hypocras about him could hee stand,
And with his knife hee strake him to the heart,
Because in Science hee thought him too expert,
Sone after this Hypocras tooke sicknesse,
By want of blood, and of corpes feblenesse:
Then kest his booke, and sought his own science,
Himselfe to helpe hee could get no defence,
Then his schollers in all haste came him till,
And said, Master, what is your minde and will?

The seven Sages.

He bade them bring a Tun of water fow,
With a womble an hundred holes boze throu,
When that was done there went no water out,
Then Hypocras said to them, sirs, but doubt,
This is the wrath of the living God so hie,
That this mischance hath suffered fall on me,
As ye may see, and very well perceave,
For all is iust and worthe that I haue,
And as ye see there is into this Tun,
An hundred holes with yrons out through run,
Through all these holes there goes not out a drop;
But as ye see doth both stand still and stop,
Which to nature is contrare every deale,
Whereby ye may all vnderstand right well:
Euen so these herbes for health that ye giue me,
May nothing help to mine infirmitie:
Therefore what euer ye take vpon me cure,
It helpes nothing ye may be very sure;
For well I wote as now is no remead,
But for my misse I must now thole the dead,
But if Galene my Nephew were liuand,
He would not faile to make me whole fra hand,
Whom I did kill through malice and enuy,
But of that dead right soze repent doe I.
Therefore God hath by his iust ordinance,
Send vpon me this hastie soze vengeance,
As he so said, no more words then he told,
But turn'd his backe, and by the Ghost he yold,
The Master said hath your Grace done conceave,
The simple words that to you shalwen I haue?

The feuen Sages.

The Emperour said, well I perceauē the case,
That Galene he was kilde by Hypocras.
To Hypocras what hurt might it haue bene,
What great honour had then come to Galene?
The Master said, it had bene good at all,
If Hypocras to sicknes had bene thʒall,
Then Galene might perchance sone found reimead:
And at that time he should not haue tholde dead:
Therefore because himselfe by ill intent,
Kilde and put downe the very instrument,
Who would haue him suppoʒted in his stes,
He may perceiue in God the great goodnes,
And right iudgement that so dull made his heart,
That he could not himselfe helpe by no art:
Therefore, my Lord, it is euen such a case,
Betwixt your sonne and your owne noble Grace:
And if your sonne for your Wiues words ye fla:
Considering well, ye know, ye haue no ma:
When he is dead, ye shall warie your weird,
And would be faine to scart him out of eird:
When ye are old, and may not help your sell,
He will you helpe, the traueth to you I tell:
Therefore giue not such credence to your Quene,
She will deceaue your Grace when ye least weene:
Consider well this is your second wife,
He may haue moe, enduring yet your life,
Among them all yet ye shall neuer haue,
So wise a sonne none of them shall conceaue,
So vertuous, oz in wit so pʒecell,
And in your age will saue you from perrell.

The seven Sages.

The Emperour said so: that ye tell to me,
Surely this day my sonne he shall not die:
But I perceave and wonder well do marke,
That women be right craftie in their warke,
And right subtle so: to tyste any man,
As they thinke good, but not the lesse what than:
For mine own sake this day he shall not die:
When I have need, I know he will help me.
The Master said, I thanke your noble Grace,
So tooke his leivē, and went home to his place.

When that this tale was told to the Emperesse
If she was blith the auditours may gesse:
She shew her selfe in mind impatient,
All that her saw beleeu'd that she had went,
Quite out of minde, and as a bodie mad,
And her five wits clæne tint away she had,
All that her saw, had pitie on her cheare,
She shouted so, that all the place might heare,
Some of the Lords to th' Emperour can go,
And shew to him that it stood with her so.
They said, my Lord, vnlesse ye find remed,
Your owne Emprice will put her selfe to dead:
Whom to he pass, and ask'd at her wherefore,
Each day ye mourne ay more and more.
She said, my Lord, I maruell in a part,
That I brast not, and in two breakes mine heart,
I know, I am the daughter of a King,
And then your Wife which is a greater thing,
In all my dayes suffred I not such shame,

The seven Sages.

As I haue done since I came to you hame,
And euermore ye promise me amends:
And as ye doe, God and the world it kens.
The Emperour said, I know not what to do.
For to which side is best to turne me to:
For day by day ye seeke mine owne sonnes dead,
And his Masters thereof doe seeke tremead,
He is my sonne that I beleue and know,
But I can not the veritie yet show,
Whether to you I shall giue more credence,
Than to the Masters with all their great Science,
Ye tell a tale which I thinke good and faire,
And they another to yours is flat contrare.
The Emprice said, that is the very thing,
That troubles mine heart, & causeth my mourning,
Because ye giue vnto them more credence,
And to their tales takes greater attendance,
Than to my tale which tells the veritie,
Which ye shall sore repent yet ere ye die,
And in few daies ye will get such reward,
As did a King receaue from his Steward:
The Emperour said, then tell me that tale soone,
Perchance your will thereafter may be done.
She said, I will begin with diligence,
But I pray you to me giue audience,
With peart visage and countenance right hale,
On this fashion began to tell her tale:
Yet ere she got of her tale audience,
Some we will say of the last tale past hence.

The seuen Sages.
MORALITAS.

YEE may perceauce now heere expresse,
Of women the great brucklenesse,
And of their kind the kittlenes, and she a Queen,
Her owne priuitie she did confesse, vnto GALENE.

At short to him her mind hath showne.
A King she hauing of her owne,
Another tooke, but little knowne, and of the new,
But many such draghts they haue drawn, y few men knew

Peraduenture she must be excusde,
Peraduenture she will not vse it:
As now she shall not be excusde, I say for me:
Euen as ye finde the foord so roose it, where euer ye be,

And let such quiet pakes ou'rpasse,
And some thing say of Hypocras,
That so full of enuy hee was, but cause or why,
Galene he slew that was so true, through poore enuy,

Hypocras cleene I discommend,
Euer in heart for to pretend,
So far to Galene to offend as him to sla,
But he repented at his end that he did sa.

The principall cause thereof find I,
That Hypocras had so great enuy,
At Galene this was his cause why, that Galene was,
More firme and stable, in craft more able than Hypocras.

Hypocras should haue had pleasure,
That Galene gote any honour,
For he was Galenes Doctoure, therefore say I:
He should haue borne to him fauour, and not enuy,

The seuen Sages.

But God of his great equity,
Would not thole such unpunisht be:
When Hypocras was in point to die, all his cunning,
Could not then helpe him worth a flie, at his ending.

He said, Had Galene beene liuand,
He could haue helped him fra hand,
But he wist well it was the wand that God had send,
Him such distresse, and great sicknes, that none could med.

The hid enuy, and great hatrent,
That he had to this innocent,
Could not eschew the punishment of heauen so hie,
Good sirs, lay by all hid enuy, keepe charity.

Enuy, and charity are contrare,
They cannot in a place repare,
Where charity is, ay God is there withoutten faile,
Enuy was, and is, euermore with grieve and baile.

It is the fountaine and the flood,
Of shadding of all innocent blood,
And is contrare vnto all good, and is the root,
Enuy therefore shall neuer glorie, of joy the fruite.

Austene declares enuy to be,
A man to haue sturt inwardly,
Of his neighbours felicity, withoutten cause,
The which is contrarie Charitie, and Gods Lawes,

Doctours writs there is a hill,
Called Ætna that burnes ay still,
In flame of fire, and neuer will be quenched out,
And yet they say, it doth none ill to ground about.

Which

The seven Sages.

Which hill burning men doe compare,
To a man that lyes euermare
In flurt, enuy, anger and care continually,
In fire flames himselfe consumes, ay inwardly.

Enuyfull men comparde may be,
Vnto a Leper man truly,
He wouldall men were such as he, euen so the Deuill.
Would none were good nor yet wel lou'd, cause he is euil

Therefore, my Lords and Readers all,
Touching this point I crie and call;
So to enuy ye be not thrall, for ought may be,
For the great Lord Celestiall is Charitie.

A laud and praise to the fift Doctour.

PRudent, perfect, expert Philosophour,
Honour and praise be to thee digne Doctour,
That hath ou'rput a day so perrellous,
With thy sweete tale before the Emperour,
Who kindled was in fell and fire furour,
Contrare his sonne in mind malitious,
By entising of his Wife venemous,
But thou from him with faire words and saour,
Hast purchast grace while time more prosperous,

The Emprice sixt tale.

BEfoze this time there was a mightie King,
Pridfull in heart, and proude aboue all thing,
He was so hight and pridfull in his thought,
All other men hee set them cleene at nought.
This King hee thought all Rome for destroy.

The

The ſeuen Sages.

The Romanes ſlay, and after to conuoy,
To his Kingdome, the dead bones of theſe two,
Peter and Paule with many reliques mo
To waſte that towne, and put it all to ſacke,
But his purpoſe was ſomething put abacke:
Into his face was ſo diſfigurate,
In ſuch a ſort, that euerie kinde of ſtate,
Abhorred ſo his ugly ſoule viſage,
That none couet to touch his perſonage,
So handled hee was with ſuch infirmitie,
With lepernes a ſouler none could bee,
Yet his nature roſe on him with ſuch rage,
To haue women hee had a great courage.
So called hee his Steward quietlie,
And ſhew to him his counſell ſecretlie:
Saying my friend, one thing I will you ſhow,
All women kind abhorres mee as yee know,
That I can get of them no companie,
Which if I had, were great pleaſure to mee.
Hee ſaid, My Lord, and pleaſe your noble Grace.
Howbeit yee bee deformed in the face:
Wee haue enough of good money and gold,
For to conduce the faireſt on the mold,
Therefore, I ſay yee need not in no ſort,
Of faire women to want the great comfort.
Then ſaid the King. Hee ſeek no coſt yee ſpare,
To get mee one that is both freſh and faire:
Howbeit yee gaue a thouſand crownes therefore,
And ere I wante, yee ſhall giue mee kyle more,
The Steward ſaid, I will doe that I may,

The seven Sages.

To fill your will, and so he came his way:
Thinking in minde, blinded with couetice,
These thousand crownes may I get on this wise,
Win to my selfe, and to my wife alone,
And so homeward to his wife he is gone,
Who was right faire, lousome with all beantie,
Vertuous and good, right pleasant for to see,
Prudent, perfit, with countenance right glad,
With couetous heart these words to her he said,
O my good wife, my soueraigne Lord the King,
 hath charged me with a right secret thing,
To haue women he is right couetous,
At his pleasure, and verie desirous,
Which for no cost he sayes that he will want,
And charges me a thousand crownes to grant,
To any person that will the same receaue,
But for one night with him her for to haue:
Therefore in minde my selfe I haue compass,
Betwixt vs two I thinke this be the best,
The thousand crownes to purchase to our sell,
So ye will vse my bidding and counsell.
He said, good sir, your counsell I will do,
So to no shame nor sinne it turne me to.
He said, ye shall passe to the Kings bed,
Which is with silke, and cloath of gold ouerspzen,
And there all night lye with him quietly,
At his pleasure as he thinkes best to be,
That it is ye there is no man shall ken,
But I alone: the which aboue all men
Should saue your shame, and als your honestie.

There

The seven Sages.

Therefore as shame to you it can not be.
Alas, she saith, husband is that your will.
By your body my womanhead to spill,
With a Leper, and so deformed in face:
Sir, change your minde, for him that gaue all Grace
I know it is neither your thought nor mind,
To such a deed mine heart should be inclin'd:
But me to proue, and to tempt mine intent,
If I thereto would any wise consent,
O my good wife, howbeit he Leper be,
And in the face deformed as ye see:
And foule of flesh, and also foule of blood,
Yet then the gold is very sweet and good.
She said againe, my sweet husband perceauē,
Howbeit the gold be good and sweet to haue,
And though he were the cleanest man there out,
Most faire of face, gentle, courtesse and stout,
Would ye that I committed such a sin,
Against my God, for any gold to win?
I will not doe it, therefore hold me excusit,
Charge me no more: for here I quite refuse it:
Whom to he said, with a right austere looke,
How purpose ye my companie to brooke,
That thing I will to please for to gainstand:
Ye are to peart to contrare my command:
It is my will, and that same shall be done,
Therefore make you ready to please me soone.
Doe ye it not, I vow betwixt vs tway,
Shall neuer be a blith nor ioyfull day:
But euermore in chiding and in grieve,

Which

The seven Sages.

Which at the last will turne to a mischief.
Know ye not well, to the Church when ye went,
Ye sware ye should be ay obedient,
To me alone as wedlocke vs declares:
Hea, sir she said, in all lawfull affaires,
Not displeasing my maker King of Kings,
I will obey you in all other things:
If you command by vertue of that oath,
Which for to breake ye should be very loth,
Considering it is my minde and will,
Without gainsay, my bidding ye fulfill,
And to the same right sone that ye consent,
Or I abow, right soze ye shall repent.
In the meane time as he these words shew,
Out of his sheath his whinger forth he drew,
She trembling soze soz great dreadour and feare,
Forth of that sted, a step she durst not feare.
Perceauing well his crueltie and boast,
And in great doubt her life for to be lost:
The impatience and the great greedines,
The cruell minde, and als the cravednes
Of this ill man, this woman did attend,
Which in no sort nor fashon she could mend:
She was constrainde what for dreadour and aw,
For to consent to his command and saw.
He said, good-man, your bidding I must do,
But great God knowes if my will be thereto:
But I appeale from all consent of sin,
That may follow, or in this case come in:
And on your selfe all whole I lay the charge,

And

The seven Sages

And befoze God hereof I me discharge:
Then the Steward but any taryng,
Wast in all haste and said vnto the King,
I haue you gotten a woman right famous,
Gentle, courtesie, and come of a good house,
Fair and well fauour'd, right pleasant for to see,
And she must come to you right quietly:
Within the night she must come late at Euen,
But me alone with none she will be seene:
Carely at mozne befoze the sunne rising,
From you likewise she must make departing,
For this she will a thousand crownes haue,
And for payment but me, none shall she craue,
Then said the King, of that I am content,
As ye haue done, thereto I will consent,
Withoutten moze the Steward he hath led,
His own spous'd Wife vnto the Kings bed,
And with the key the doze he hath made fast,
But any noise, and so away is past,
Carely at mozne in dawning of the day,
The Steward rose, and to the King can say,
My soueraigne Lord, and please your noble Grace,
It will be day within a prettie space,
I thinke it good, that woman ye let go,
For I promis'd that your Grace should doe so.
Then said the King, this woman pleaseth me,
So wonder well, as yet her companie
I will not want, neither for gold nor geare,
This houre to come, I will not let her steare,
When he that heard, he was right wonder woe,

The seven Sages.

And from the Dooze with sozie heart did goe,
Within a while but tarie come againe,
And to the King hee said, Sir, for certaine,
The day is light, and that woman present,
With the folke thee will bee shamefullie shent,
And my promise to her quite I haue broken,
For not keeping to her that I haue spoken.
Then said the King, no wise yet she shall passe,
For shee shall haue of mee what shee will as,
Therefore, Steward, I say to you in plaine,
Goe passe your way, and locke the Doozes againe.
The Steward then right sorrowfull in heart,
Upon neede force to the Dooze did depart.
Went vp and downe, and knew not what to say,
The Sunne was high, and much spent of the day;
He came againe, and said vnto the King,
It is two houres after the Sunne-rising,
That woman will bee shent withoutten doubt,
With all the folke, and people hereabout.
The King answer'd nothing of him content,
You command that you your selfe absent,
Unto the time that I please for to rise,
For vnrequired ye haue troubled mee thise,
And my pleasure is with this companie.
Therefore passe on at this time let mee bee,
The Stewards heart if it was then on stee,
As I belæue there needes no man to speere,
Yet not lesse hee could not keepe counsell:
For all his wit hee would describe him sell,
Incontinent without more anising,

With

The seven Sages.

With sozie heart hee said vnto the King,
O my good Lord, I open to you mine heart.
That same woman yee will not thole depart,
Without licence, shee is my wedded Wife.
Now in your hands lyes both my death and life:
The King heard that, and said, All was not right.
Opned the windowes, and saw faire day light,
Saw the woman, who was lustie in face,
A word not spake, a Pater noster space,
Then saw it was even as the Steward said,
Whereof hee was right sozie and not glad:
Whom to hee said, O thou most wicked knaue,
How durst thou bee so peart mee to deceiue:
And mee to cause thy wife for to abuse,
Thy greedie heart thy selfe it shall confuse.
Why hast thou caused thy Wife vniwillingly,
Come in my bed to mee vniwittingly?
For a small summe of mony or riches.
To shame thy selfe for thy great greedines:
Knew yee not well withoutten any fable,
My maladic was ay incurable.
All was in thee thou hast done, I declare,
Thy selfe, thy wife to vndoe euermare
Therefore passe swith in haste out of ym sight,
For in my Realme that thou bide not foure nights:
And from hencefoorth if euer I may thee see,
A shamefull death I adow, thou shalt die.
Incontinent hee past from his presence.
And neuer saw the King from that time hence,
Quite off the Realme from thence he did him dresse
That

The seven Sages.

That same reward hee gotte for greedinesse.
This being done, the King in all his dayes,
Held by his wife as the Historie sayes,
In great worship, and gaue to her yereleie,
A summe of gold to keepe her honestie.
After that time I doe not find no need,
With this woman that hee had actuall deed,
None after this the King caused to conueene,
A great Armie all clad in Armour cleene.
With great puissance, and noble men of waere,
In all affaires as to them could effere,
And went to Rome with great power and might,
To siege the same the gate they held on right:
And so they did it siege on either side:
That the Romanes durst not therein abide:
Hee sieg'd it still so sharpe and wonder soze,
That they therein might it defend no moze,
So at the last to a counsell they went,
Thinking they should with the King mak pointment
Which was for to deliuer him at once,
Of Peter and Paule the blis bodie and bones:
Which was the cause of his great erand there,
For to obtaine the same withoutten mare,
In the citie then was there still present,
Seven wise Masters who had the regiment,
Of all the towne, and nothing by them done,
Sorely at mozne, at Euen, or yet at noone,
And to these seven the Citizens came to,
And said, Masters, great thing wee haue ado,
We are compeld by force of yon Armie,

The seven Sages.

For to giue ouer and rander the Citie,
Vnto these folke which are our enemies:
Or els for to deliuer the bodies,
Of good Peter and Paule his holie brother,
On force wee must the one doe or the other,
The first Master againe to them hee said,
My good Neighbours, take no feare but bee glad.
As for this day, the Citie I shall saue,
With the wisdomes and cunning that I haue,
The second said, The next day falleth mee,
From enemies, for to keepe the Citie,
With my wisdomes, and als my cleare cunning,
For all the strength of that great puissant King,
So did the third, and fourth withouten doubt,
The fift, the sixt, right so the seven all out.
In like maner, as these seven Masters now,
Vnto your sonne, hath promised to you,
In the meane time the King caused his Armie,
Lay an assault about the great Citie,
With such awfull and cruell munition,
While they were like for to obtaine the Towne.
The first Master then hee came to the King,
And with him fell in talke and commoning,
And talked so in such maner and wise,
As for that day hee caused the Armie rise,
And from the Towne the siege abacke hee drew,
As for that day no more hee did persew.
But on the morne the siege againe they laid,
The next Master past to the King, and said,
In like maner, as did the other before,

And

The seven Sages.

And for that day they sieg'd the town no more:
So they did all while it came to the last,
On the seventh day they sieg'd the town so fast,
It was belieu'd the same they would obtaine,
Then all the town together did conuene,
All in one voyce to the seventh Master said,
About the town so strong a siege is laid,
That we beleeue nothing but cruell dead,
Unlesse that ye find some helpe and remed,
Conforme to the saying, ye said but doubt,
That 'was each one to saue your day about,
And we are all inform'd of a suretie,
The King hath made his oath solemnely,
He shall not raise his siege nor munition,
Unto the time that he obtaine the town:
To you Master we can now say no more,
We would you did as your fellows before.
To whom he said, my friends, take ye no feare,
Be of comfort, and eachone make good cheare:
The mozne shall I with my worke and cunning,
Skale yon same hoast, and also fray the King,
He shall be glad for all his great puissance,
To passe away with his great Ordinance.
They went their way, and no more toke in thought,
But all marvelde how such thing should be wrought
The mozne earely the siege was sure confirm'd,
To haue the town also the King determ'd.
This seventh Master to his chamber he went,
And clad him in a strange abillement,
As Peacocke tailes, and feathers of every bew.

The seven Sages.

Part red, part white, part yellow, græne and blew,
A bright drawne sword he tooke in euery hand,
On a towre head he past vp for to stand,
Which was most high of all the whole citie,
For nence the host, that they might all him see.
The two bright swords into his mouth he tooke,
The same shining vpon the armie shooke,
Whiles turned East, and other whiles West,
Whils South, whils North, where they might see him
The shining swords against the sun so blent, (best
With his clothing and strange abillement,
They in the host right well and clearely saw,
But what it was no man of them did know:
Als the great Lords when they beheld such thing,
Palse in effray they went all to the King,
And said, O Lord, behold vpon yon towre,
We see this day a wonderfull figure.
Then said the King, the same I doe perceauē,
But what it is no knowledge I can haue.
They said, we know what thing it is but doubt,
It is Iesus, down of the heauen come out,
Who is the God of all yon Christen folke:
And knowing well how that we doe prouoke,
His awsome yre and how we doe pretend,
To slay his folke, which he will ay defend,
Yon samyn swords that ye see shining sa,
They signifie eachone they will vs sla:
If we longer into this field abide,
Our counsell is therefore that we home ride.
The King hearing trembled for very feare,

Cause

The seven Sages.

Causde raise his hoast, and all his men of weere;
And said, it is better in time we flee,
For yon there God with his swords make vs die.
Then all the hoast in hast they made them hame,
Fray'd without cause with meekle scozn and shame.
Howbeit to flee no perill was nor need,
But all deceit by the Masters false deed.
When the Romanes perceiu'd the armie fle,
Eachone they ish'd, and went off the citie,
With manly heart, and goodly countenance,
Follow'd the King and all his Ordinance,
Slew and destroyde all that they pleasde that day,
And whom they list, captiue they brought away,
And so the King and all his great armie,
Brought was to ground by the great subtletie
Of this Master, who wrought all by deceat,
That with power no maner could debate.

¶ The Empryce then said to the Emperour,
This tale I told it is vnder cullour:
But would great God, this tale ye vnderstood.
He said, Madame, I thinke it very good:
In the first end (quoth she) I know you heard,
What I you told of the greedy Steward,
That the King trow'd aswell as his own life,
And yet for gold he sold his wedded Wife,
And als himselfe was banisht the countrie:
Because the King found him so false and lie.
In like maner your sonne for the desire,
And appetite he hath to the Empryce,
Now day by day it is his mind and thought,

The seuen Sages.

You to destroy, and bring you vnto nought,
But now so long as ye are in your might,
Doe as the King did with the Steward right,
If ye purpose not to slay him fra hand,
Then banish him, and als forswear the land.
That ye and I who am your wedded Wife,
In time comming in rest may lead our life:
Also ye heard how the King lay at Rome,
To win the same how that he did presume,
And was mocked by these Masters in plaine,
He and his folkes were all put downe and slaine:
Your seuen Masters into the samine wise,
Intend doe ay to such like enterprise.
With their false tales at end will you deceaue,
That your false sonne all the Empyre may haue.
The Emperour said, by no way that shall be,
The mozne betime he shall not faile to die.
Incontinent he called his seruands,
And to them all he gaue such strait commands:
That on the mozne without impediment,
On the gallous but faile his sonne be shent.
This word in haste past out through all the toun,
Whereat many made lamentatioun,
That the Emperour for the words of his Wife,
From his one sonne with shame should take the life.
The sirt Master heard tell of this effray,
Lap on his horse withoutten moze delay,
Posted fra hand vnto the Emperour,
And hailed him with reuerence and honour,
Who toke the same verie vnthankfully,

And

The seven Sages.

And said, hee seru'd at his hand for to die,
And als his sonne, whom that they had made dumbe
For they were too peart in his pzenence to come.

The Master said, I serue not for to die,
For yet your sonne knew yee the veritie,
That hee is dumbe where yee alledge and sayes,
Of that the trueth yee shall know in few dayes:
If yee him slay for that your Wife can tell,
Of your wisdom then haue I great maruell.
And without doubt it shall you happen right,
As it hapned sometime vnto a Knight.

To his Wiues salues gaue such fidelitie,
That hee was drawne out thzough the whole Citie,
At a Horse-taile, and hanged like a Thiefe,
His Wiues salues bzought him to such mischiefe.

The Emperour said, I pray the tell that tale,

The Master said, Sir, that shall I not fale,
So yee will cause your sonne to come againe,
And for this day yee let him not bee slaine.

Incontinent the Emperour gaue command,
To the prison to lead his sonne fra hand,
And so was done. The Master then but mare,
To tell his tale began thus to declare.

The Doctors tale furthermoze ere wee heare,
Some mozaill sense of the last let vs leare.

M O R A L I T A S.

THis pridefull King hee could not reigne,
With measure nor humilitie,
He was so proude, he thought none could,
Compare to him there might not be,

The

The seven Sages.

The Lord of all perceiu'd and saw,
That his heart was so proud on hie,
He would correct him and infect,
With plague and great infirmitie.

Where there is pride, grace cannot bide,
Out of that roome in haste he rins,
Into all haste as he were chafde,
To lowlines to seeke an innes,
The bright Angell for pride he fell,
In Hell yet still in paine he winnes,
I say you all, that man shall fall,
His worke with pride alway begins,

The wise-man writes, where he indites,
All beginning of ill is pride:
And many mo, sayes, come right so,
Into their writtings doe not hide.
Therefore the Lord will no wise cord,
Where pride hath credence for to guide,
If you declare he scourgeth sore,
For where pride is, God will not bide.

Of his iustice, such wicked vice,
He will not thole vnpunish'd be,
By Battell, Pest, Warre, or Wantest,
Some perrilous plague, or Pouertie,
Hunger and skant, of food or want,
Infected with infirmitie,
Therefore flee pride, all times and tide,
And hold you with humilitie.

Als in this tale withoutten faile,
Great couetice ye may perceauce,
The false Steward that found the art,
The King himselfe and wife deceauce:

The seven Sages.

But on himfelfe the sorrow fell.
He was worthie the fame to haue,
To be exilde the King beguilde,
I fay for me he playde the knaue.

That his owne wife, firft fylde her life,
And then her foule with deadly fin,
By Steward, fy, was that thy why,
So foolifhlie geare for to win;
With couetice and auarice,
At fuch a false way to begin,
For greedines to win riches.
Too many to the deuill would rin.

By common theft, fome makes their fhift,
In this world while their life be ended:
To plucke the poore, they take no cure,
Who haue no power to defend it.
Some reaues and ruges, fome riues and drugs,
And purpofeth neuer to amend it,
But when it's win, few of your kin,
Nor yet your felfe fhall euer spend it.

So couetous and defirous,
This Steward was gold for to win;
He cared nought for to haue brought
His Wife to deadly fhame and fin:
Whether hee gote it, or no, few wot it,
For fra the King and he did twin,
Indeed I trow, to fay to you,
He had another web to spin.

Hee charged was with for to paffe,
Out of the Realme or be confound,
His owne falset snarde him in net,
His deed to himfelfe did redound.

But

The seven Sages.

But who would make an happie pake,
See falset therein be not found,
Lawtie and right shoves ay the right,
On greedinesse set not your ground.

As to this King, that lay in sieging,
And was so frayde for Peacok tailes,
And two bright swords, with some vaine words
Without more skaith his armie skales,
His campe to raise, and saw few faes:
I thinke they were but sniffing snails,
The Potingare takes little care,
To cure the man that nothing ailes.

A King should ay, at such essay,
Haue a sate counsell him beside,
Perchance a fray may make him prey,
And cause him flee when he should bide:
Daft vanities grounded with lies,
At all times hee should let ou'rslide,
Be circumspect, and in his necke,
Ay haue an eye all times and tide,

Hastie credence doth great offence,
If it be in a Conquerour,
Right well should he, auised be,
To euery tale to giue answere,
To treat his Lords, as well accords,
Then they will serue him with honour,
With blith visage, cause pay his wage,
Hee shall triumph and be victour.

Had he so doone, not halfe so soone,
Hee had not beene so lightly chaist:
But the Doctour vpon the towre.
Made him out of his minde almaiſt,

Captaines

The feuen Sages.

Captaines and Kings take heed to such things,
See to all trates ye giue no traist:
For if ye do, it will come to,
As to the King that saw the ghaist,

A reproach to the Emprice.

GOMORRAS gracelesse guid, & Sodoms shameles seed,
Thou Belials bitter bird, both false in word and deed,
Thy boast thou blowes on breadth shalt not saue thee, I say,
Thine arse burnt in a gleece, I thinke to see some day,
Thou shalt not so away, thou common curst Cowlinke,
Trowes thou to scape, nay, nay, I rather neuer drinke.

The tale of the fifth Master.

Wpon a time there was in Romes town,
An Emperour of great might and renown:
Who had great Kings into his companie,
Lords, Barons, Knights of great nobilitie,
Doing seruice, as could them best effeere,
Some for pastime, and some to stufte his weere:
He had thre Knights whome he lou'd ou'r the laue,
In all affaires more credence to them gaue.
Another Knight there was in the citie,
That had wedded a lustie gay Ladie,
As ye haue done your Princesse and your Wife,
Whom he loued as well as his owne life.
This Ladie could make merie, sing and dance,
In companie she could make good passance,
Wanton young men euen for that samin cause,

The seven Sages.

To her ludging, all time of day she drawes,
And at all times she sang so wonder sweet,
That euerie man that past vpon the street,
Had great pleasure of her dulce melodie,
And causde each man couet her companie,
She sang so sweet, so curious and cleare,
All had delite her singing for to heare,
And so came by one of the knights thre,
That the Emperour lou'd so inwardly,
And heard her sing with voyce so curious,
Trow'd well she was a Ladie amorous,
He blent about, and in place where she sate,
Incontinent he was tane in the net,
Of lusts rage, and of that Ladie faire,
Euen still he stood, and past no furthermare.
While that he got in her house enterie,
And for a time booz there good companie:
So at the last he fell in commoning,
With this Ladie of loue, and such talking,
So inwardly at her he did enquire,
What she should haue, and fulfill his desire,
And sleepe with him but the space of a night.
She asked him a hundreth florens bright.
He said, Ladie, I will giue you no lesse.
Shew me the time thereto when I shall dresse,
She said, good sir, at time conuenient,
When I thinke time, ye shall be after sent:
So instantly that night he did depart,
And of his tryll was verie blith in heart:
Belæuing sure that she should for him send,

But

The feuen Sages.

But small he knew how all would come to end.
So on the morne she sang into her bower,
Came the next knight perteind the Emperour,
Saw this Ladie, and heard her voyce so sweet,
Tooke great langour, while he could with her méet,
And so he did, and shew to her his minde,
Unto the which she was right well inclinde:
Who promis'd her of good fflowens five score.
She said, good sir of you I aske no more.
He said, Ladie, when shall I trust thereto?
A good due time I shall prouide (quoth she)
So he as then departed merrily.
Trusting his trust in all thing well should be.
On the third day, the third knight in likewise,
Came by her house, and the same enterprise
He tooke on hand, and heght to his Lady,
Fivescore fflowens of him she should haue readie,
For to performe and satisfie his will.
She was content, and granted well theretill:
When I should come (quoth he) I would ye shew,
I shall send word (quoth she) as I am true:
So all these thre had gotten her consent,
But none of them knew yet others intent,
Then this Ladie of all malice repléet,
To her husband she said into secret.
Secret matters I haue to you to shew,
But ye alone, no person must it know:
And if ye will the samine take on hand,
For great profite to vs both it will stand,
And will relieue vs of all pouertie,

The seven Sages.

In time comming, and liue in honestie.
He said, good Dame, I can well keepe counsell,
Of any thing that ye will to me tell,
To keepe counsell it pertaines to a man,
But by contrare is no woman that can,
Of their counsell I read once in a tale,
It is comparde to butter in hote Kale.
Yet not the lesse, the sooth if ye will show,
What ever it be, there is no man shall know.
Quoth she, it is a thing of veritie,
That may vs hold ay still in honestie.
Show me (said he) and I shall keepe counsell,
Of all secrets that ye will to me tell,
At my power the same I shall fulfill:
Therefore shew forth if that it be your will.
Quoth she (good sir) there hath bene knights thre,
Here diuers times desiring loue of me,
And promis'd me but doubt a good propine,
Each one of them fīue score of flozens fine:
At sundry times eachone came quietly,
Not one knowing of others priuie,
Could we this gold unknowne get in our hand,
Into great speed but doubt it should vs stand.
Then said the knight, Dame ye say veritie,
But of good zeale tell on how that can be.
She said, good sir, my counsell you shall heare,
How ye shall doe, the way I shall you leare:
I promis'd them euery man by him sell,
When they should come, the time I should them tell,
In the same time at the gate ye shall stand,

Right

The leuen Sages.

Right quietly with your drowne sword in hand,
And when they come into their order sa,
Wee shall not faile all thzee them for to sla,
So thzee hundzeth fflozens wee shall obtaine,
And none shall know, noz yet the knights bee seens;
Whom to hee said, O my beloued wife,
Should I for gold take any man his life,
To doe such thing, of God I stand such aw,
And als it is contrare to the Kings law,
And I doubt not if such a thing were done,
Withoutten doubt it should bee knowne sone.
Quoth shee, feare not, the deede I take on hand,
To end it out peartlie thereat shall stand,
And when hee heard the tale then that shee told,
It made the man moze hardie and moze bold.
So by counsell of this ill wiues intent,
Shee causde this knight to that slaughter consent,
This ill woman when commed was the night,
Incontinent shee send for the first knight,
But moze abode vnto the gate came hee,
As hee thought best, knocked right quietly,
Then answered shee, and at him could shee speere,
Haue yee not brought an hundzeth fflozens heere,
But doubt said hee I haue them heere pzeent,
Then shee vnrlock't the gate incontinent,
As hee came in and entred at the gate,
Then her husband such a strake on him set,
Without moze talke, but shortly with his sword,
Gaue him such waps, that hee spake neuer word:
With the second hee did the samine guise.

And

The seven Sages.

And with the third hee plai'd on the same wise,
To a secret chamber their bodies drew,
That none should know that hee any man slew.
Then said hee, Dame, if their bodies bee found,
Within this place, or yet within this ground:
It shall not faile, but wee therewith shall die
The most vile dead that can imagin'd bee.
They will bee mist into the Court but doubt.
And will bee sought in all these parts about:
Shee said, Good sir, this worke first I began,
To end that same right wonder well I can.
My joy feare not, as I haue said before.
For I can dresse such thing if it were more,
This Ladie had into the same citie,
A gentleman and her brother was hee.
Within the towne the guiding had to keepe,
Ou'rall the watches that they should no way sleepe,
So on the night as hee pass through the streete,
At her owne gate her brother could shee meete,
A secret thing (quoth shee) my deare brother,
I must show you, as now vnto none other.
Then entred hee, and the Knight her Husband,
Welcom'd him well, and tooke him by the hand,
Talked at length, and merily dranke the wine.
And then the Knight said to her brother syne,
Brother (said hee) I heartly you enquire,
Of your counsell right greatly I desire,
To haue the same, for hereof I haue need.
Her brother said, truely so God mee speed,
At my power, my counsell and good thought,

The seven Sages.

Hee shall not want, and therein doubt yee not.
Shee said Brother. this is the verie case,
Yesterday last there came vnto our place,
Unknowne to vs an honest noble Knight,
Whom wee entreated the best manner wee might,
And so by chance hee fell in argument,
Whereat mine Husband stood nothing content:
At last hee ranne so high in villanie,
That would ye moze: mine husband causede him die
And still hee lyeth into our chamber hid,
To no person as yet is knowne this deed:
And wee haue none to doe for vs as now,
This great matter for to conuoy but you,
If hee bee found with vs as chance may bee,
It will not faile but doubt wee shall both die.
And shee made mention but of one Knight:
Not shewing him the veritie nor right:
Her brother said, Deliuier him to mee,
I shall him beare in a sacke to the sea,
Hee hearing that was verie blith and glad,
Deliuered him the dead Knight as shee said,
And to the sea the hie way hee is past,
With the dead Knight, and therein did him cast,
His being done, to his sister hee said,
We are now quite of you, therefore bee glad,
As yee desire this matter now is drest,
Now fill the wine, let vs drinke of the best.
That shall yee haue (quoth shee) with merie chærs,
With all our hearts the best that wee haue heere,
To the Chamber in all haste past shee sone,

The seven Sages.

As it had bene for to haue brought him wine,
And then begouth with a loude voyce to cry,
O deare brother, right wonder fray'd am I,
The samine knight that yee kest in the sea,
In our chamber againe is come to mee.
Then her brother thereof had great maruell:
When that hee heard his sister so him tell,
And I trust that there cannot bee such thing,
Yet not the lesse againe to mee him bring,
I shall him put hee shall not come againe,
But still for aye I know hee shall remaine.
Hee bound him fast into another seck,
With a great stone hanging about his necke:
The next knight toke, bel'euing that it was
The first dead knight, and to the sea can passe,
Upon his backe hee hee'de him also right.
And there but more casts in the second knight,
When came hee home to his sister and said,
No more yee shall with yon knight bee affraid,
For hee is cast into the sea so far,
That well I know hee shall neuer come nax,
Therefore fill wine, and let vs drinke about,
For of yon knight I put you out of doubt,
To her chamber to fetch wine shee didaine,
With a loud voyce shee cryde fray'dly againe.
O my brother, the knight, I say you sure,
Whom yee did drowne, is in my chamber floze,
Woe bee to mee, I know not what to say,
For by no meane he will not bide away.
Her brother heard, and said, What deuill is this?
Tha

The seven Sages.

That very knight he is some witch I with,
I haue him drownd two sundry times but doubt,
And ay againe he of the sea comes out,
Yet the thirde time deliuer him to me,
And I no more shall cast him in the sea,
But I shall burne his bones into a fire.
Brother, said she, the same thing I desire:
Then she deliuered the last knight of the thre,
And he belæu'd it was the first truely:
So the thirde knight away with him hath tane,
Knowing nothing but all thre had bene ane,
Without the toun a mile from the citie,
In a fozeest a great fire bigged he,
And the thirde knight he cast therein to burne,
Belæuing well he had done a good turne,
That put away the very instrument,
That was able his sister to haue hent.
This dead knight burnt, that other did him speed,
As becomes all to doe his naturall deed,
Up from the fire he past a bow-shot space,
Into the wood to doe such busines,
And so it chanc'd that samine very night,
Came throug the wood riding another knight,
Which had a tryst the nyght in that citie,
At a iusting there him behou'd to be,
For wearines was both hungrie and cold,
He blent about, and the fire could behold,
Him to refresh thither he went thereto,
But he knew not what had bene there ado,
He lighted down, tied his horse to a tree,
And

The seven Sages.

And to the fire incontinent past he,
To warme his hands, and to comfort his cosse,
And for a while to rest his tyred horse.
Then the same Knight that was the womans brother,
Came to the fire againe and saw another
Stand at the fire, whom to he said in hye,
What may thou be? he said, a Knight am I,
Quoth he againe, I know thou art no Knight,
Thou art a deuill, that well I wote full right:
Twise I thee drownd, the first time in a seck,
The second time, a great stone at thy necke,
And now thirdly, I burnt thee in this fire,
And yet to line I thinke thou wilt not tyre:
Where thou the Deuill and als the Devils dame,
Ere I were combed so with thee as I am,
I rather burne thee ten times in a fyre,
Thy horse, thy selfe, both thy bowke bones and lyre:
As he so said, in his armes he him toke,
In mids the fire, he kest him in the smoke,
And then his horse aboue him also kest,
So burnt them both ere ever he toke rest.
To his sister then came he home againe,
What him betide, he told to her in plaine.
Fill the best wine (quoth he) and spare it nought,
For without doubt right deare I haue it bought.
When in the fire that I had burnt him once,
Incontinent he stands vp bowke and bones,
Before the fire and his horse him beside.
What deuill (said I) me thinke thou shap'st to ride,
So in the fire I kest him horse and all,

The seven Sages.

All this tisser, said he chanc'd me befall,
Then in her minde she kest incontinent,
That he had burnt a Knight of Tournament:
Yet not the lesse, she brought him the best wine,
Dranke merily, and so past his way fine.
Not long after, this wife and her owne Knight,
Fell in debate by chance vpon a night,
And she gaue him some words outragious,
High and halting and very despitous,
Wherethrough he grew with her in matalent,
Two stripes or thre so hath he to her lent.
Then said his wife, thiese, wilt thou murther me,
As thou hast done the Emperours Knights thre?
Thou seruest well to be hanged and drawne,
If such thing were vnto our neighbours knowne,
Neighbours about these cruell words did heare,
The rumour rose, the folke grew all in feare:
Word went with speed vnto the Emperour,
They were sent for but any delatour,
Who were accusde of such a cruell crime,
Done she confest the deed, the houre and time,
How he murtherist the Emperours Knights thre,
Within the night into great crueltie,
And how that they spoyled from euery Knight,
Finescore flozens of gold that was so bright:
And how that she the mater first inuented,
And how that he thereto first disauented,
So they were both condemned by the law,
That officers at horse-tailes should them draw,
To the gallous out through the whole citie.

The seven Sages.

As their great shame that each man might it see,
On the gallous they were put both to dead,
As they deseru'd but mercie or remead.
The Master said vnto the Emperour,
Seru'd they not death, that made so great murthe
The Emperour said, that Wife was wonder euill,
By appearance was tempted with the Deuill.
She was the first the matter mou'd and bred,
Likewise the first the samin causde out spred.
The Master said, worse shall come to your sell,
Slay ye your sonne for your ill Wifes counsell,
My sonne, said he, for that now ye haue said,
There shall no charge of death be to him laid.
As for this day therefore passe to your place.
The Master said, God saue your noble Grace,
So tooke his leue, and with a merie heart,
To his owne house from the Court did depart.

When the Empryce of these tithings heard
She was most like for to haue slaine her
As a wood Wife came to the Emperour,
Behold, said she, a woman of valour,
Except that ye me sooner get remead,
I shall but doubt mine own selfe put to dead,
I am so shame with the countrie about,
That I thinke shame of my chamber come out,
And no remead, what euer I doe or say,
But with false tales put off from day to day,
Ie upon you that suffers such a thing.
Ye are not worth to be Emperour nor King,

The seven Sages.

Yee cure no shame, yee cure no worlds wonder.
To haue mee shamd, and your selfe put at vnder.
And to bee shamide, and called an Emperours wife,
I shall rather my selfe fall on a knife:
The paine of death indures but halfe an houre,
But euermore shame shall degrad honour.
The Emperour said, I pray God you defend,
That yee take not such an unhappie end,
To take in thought your owne selfe for to fla,
What euer yee doe, I pray you doe not sa,
And I pray God that I not causer bee
Of such mischance, nor such aduersitie:
But will yee thole, and suffer a litle while,
Your cause will come to a far better stile,
And your complaint will haue the better end,
Your just quarrell euer I shall defend.
Quoth shee againe, The end shall not bee good:
Both you and mee it shall vs both exclude
Off this Empire, and put vs to confusion,
For seven Masters leades you to such abusion,
That it shall chance to you hereafterward,
As it came to the King and his Steward.
The Emperour said, I pray you not to faile.
Of your goodnesse forth to mee tell that tale,
Shee said, My Lord, to tell that tale againe,
Till I perceiue it will be not in vaine,
For the next day the seventh Master will come,
And tell a tale to saue your sonne that is dumbe,
And helpe him as his fellowes did before,
As they haue done, yee will heare mee no more

The seven Sages.

On the eight day, then shall your owne sonne come
And tell his tale which this long time was dumbe
To whose talking yee shall giue such pleasure,
That I shall be put forth of your memour,
And the great loue betwixt vs two hath beene,
In time comming now shall bee forgotte cleene.
The Emperour said, Such a thing cannot bee,
Without yee serue the same unwitting mee,
Which I beleue was neuer in your thought:
Therefore as yet such thing trow will I nought.
The Emprice said, When shall I tell my tale,
Which to your Grace it shall greatly auale,
And cause you from great perills to eschew,
Which I perceauie is else preparte for you.
By your curst sonne, and his seven Masters all,
Which after this, right well perceauie yee shall.
The Emperour said, Now I pray your goodnesse,
Tell forth your tale and leaue that busines,
So she began her tale with fained cheare,
Not blith at heart as yee shall after heare,
But ere shee tell her tale forth to the King,
Of the last tale yet let vs say some thing.

MORALITAS.

O Mercie, God, what thing is this,
This matter great it maruells mee,
That cunning Clarke cannot discus,
The ill and the iniquitie,
That into women beene;
Bred with great tray and teene,

The seven Sages.

The great deceit and subtletie,
such keenenes with great crueltie,
Was neuer heard nor seene.

This Lady in her window set,
Singing her notes so curious:
Presenting there the Deuills net.
Vnder colour so cautelous,
Young men are to her gane,
And in her net are tane,
And shee with minde malicious,
Causde murder them ilkane.

This murther first she did inuent,
That causde these men for to be slaine,
Then was the very instrument,
First to make it knowne againe:
So many wayes she fand,
For to tyft her husband,
To doe mischiefe with such false traine,
And then the same she could not lane.

But made it knowne fra hand.

Through her malice and her enuy.
Both of her husband and her sell:
The cruell murther she did outcry,
Whereof neighbours had great maruell,
Which thing they neuer knew,
While that the wife it shew:
And causde her the trueth to tell,
How all the matter first befell,

And how the knights they flew,
Who were punisht for their misdeed,
And gote the rigour of the law,
Now, sirs, perceiue what doth proceed,
Of an ill womans saw,
Whooredome was first in plaine,
Then greedines but lane,

The ſeuē Sages.

To wone the woman as yee know,
The gold and ſlaughter did on draw,
And cauſe be the man bee ſlaine,
Therefore, I ſay, yee that haue wiues,
Let them not all their ſecrets know,
For if it chance that they two ſtriuē,
All that ſhee knowes, that will ſhee ſhow,
And rather more than leſſe,
They haue that vie expreſſe;
For if yee lend them once a blow,
Quite old friendſhip they let ſaw,
Turnes all to wickedneſſe,

As did this wife in great malice,
Her husband and her ſelfe put downe,
Through her counſell and couetice,
To hide the ſame had no reaſon.
What thing yee would haue hid,
That to your wife forbidde,
And it were neuer ſo great treaſon,
That ſhee ſhall tell through all the town,
As this wicked wife did.

The Wiſeman ſayes, their tongues are ſharpe
As any ſword is wrought with hand,
Wherewith ſo crouſtie they doe carpe,
Each word they ſay, alone ſhall ſtand,
They are ſo outrageous,
Wrathfull and deſpitous,
They cure not the wag of a wand,
To cauſe you tye both life and land,
When they grow furious,

God ſaue my ſelfe from ſuch a ſort,
For I perceiue they are perilous;
I promiſe you it is no ſport,
To finde your vnfriend in your houſe;
Whether it be he or ſhe,
To tell all that I do,

The seven Sages.

And they be bold and boasteous,
So cumberfome and malitious,
I can not tell whereto.

Proverb. V.

¶ Ne intenderis malitia mulieris, quia novissima illius amara quasi absinthium: longè fac ab ea viam tuam, quia lingua eius acuta quasi gladius anceps, & pedes eius descendunt in mortem.

A praise to the sixt Doctour.

THy goldē toug with grace so thou hast guided
That to this Child yet life thou hast provided
Contrare the Queene, a vengeance on her corse,
But without doubt ere sentence be decided,
I know the Child boldly he will abide it:
For why? he knowes both the best and the worse
And if so be the Queene must bide on force:
Yet not the lesse thou should haue thāks but doubt
Thou good Master, that kept thy day about.

The Emprice seuenth tale.

BEfore this time there was a noble King,
That lou'd his wife aboue each earthly thing,
He had to her so great loue and fauour,
He kepted her each day within closour,
In the great house of a strengthie castell,
Whereof the keyes he kepted ay himsell.
Whereat this Lady tooke great heavines,
That she was holden into so great straitnes,
Wanting solace, and all good companie,

But

The seven Sages.

But when the King came in allanerly.

In other parts there was a noble knight,
It chanced him to dreame into the night,
Into his sleepe he thought well that he saw,
The fairest thing that euer man did know,
Whose lone he couet aboue each earthly thing,
If he might see her on the earth walking.

Nothing doubting but by her come should he,
To great honour, worship and honestie.

That samine Queene that night in vision,
Dream'd of this knight, and on this same fashion,
And yet neither of other knew the name.

For knowledge had by fashion or by fame:
This knight he rose vpon the morne earely,
Remembred well on this dreame sickerly,
And determed into his mind and thought,
That by no maner way rest would he nought,
Unto the time that Ladie while he fand,
If that she might be gotten in any land,
Lap on his horse, and in haste forth he rade,
To seeke this Queene no longer tary made,
Through royal Realmes and diuers great countries,
Through rich Regions, and seemely faire cities,
This fair Lady yead so far in his thought,
There was no lands for her he left vnsought.

While at the last he came to a citie,

Where he got wit there was a faire ladie:
Keeped so close, that none might come her till,
Except alone it were the Kings will,
There he scournd for his pastime a space,

The seven Sages.

Him to refresh in mirth and merines.
So it fortun'd to him vpon a day,
Passe by this place where that this Ladie lay,
In her window looking forth her alone,
For other game and pastime got she none:
So she chanced sone for to get a sight,
Whom of she dreame'd, of this same verie Knight,
Thinking right well the samine man was he,
Into her dreame befoze that she did see,
He not knowing that the Ladie was there,
But by chance came down by making repare,
In meane season he lifted vp his eye,
In her window this Ladie can he see,
Thinking right well it was the samine Quene,
That he befoze into his dreame had scene,
Then he began to sing a song of loue,
Which when she heard, greatly it did her moue,
Into his loue, and printed into her heart,
Which was vnkowne to him in any part,
Yet not the lesse dayly he made repare,
About the place to take pastime and air.
Then this Ladie perceiuing this at all,
A bill of loue to him she let downe fall,
And he in haste read ouer this prettie bill,
Perceiuing well the Ladies mind and will,
From this time forth he vsed dayly iusting,
Breaking of speares, and also horse-running,
Casting of stone, and als the leaden mell,
Wrestling and leaping he did exerce him sell,
Dayly such acts he vsde, and honest deedes,
That

The seven Sages.

That in the Court his fame and word vnspreads,
While at the last, his name and good bearing,
And honest acts were shovne vnto the King.
The King hearing his valiant toznamenent,
He sent for him message incontinent,
Who charged him, the King he should come till,
To heare his mind, his pleasure and his will.
Who came to him with all humilitie,
As him effeer'd low knæling on his knee.
Sir Knight he said, I haue heard of you tell,
How in good acts ye haue exerc'd your sell,
Into my Court among my gentlemen,
Wherefore sith I such acts doe of you ken,
Please ye remaine into our companie,
Ye shall haue gifts and good reward of me,
And be one of my guard and my counsell,
So it please you with vs remaine and dwell.
Then said the Knight, and please your Maiestie,
To haue seruice of such a man as me:
I shall you serue both with mine hand and heart,
In all affaires such as pertaines my part,
Without reward or any recompence,
So that I may dayly haue your presence,
And since your Grace hath now desired me,
Into your guard, and on your counsell be,
I would your Grace to my desire would grant,
So on seruice the better I might hant.
A new ludging to haue at the towres side,
Where I might be, and at your bidding bide.
If that your Grace needed vpon me call,

The seuen Sages.

He might cause cry out ouer the Castle wall,
Then said the King, Faith I consent thereto,
Soe big your house, as yee thinke best to do.
Then past the Knight ere euer hee would tire,
And ferd workmen, and promisd them good hire,
His house was bigged with timber, stone & thacke,
With a Mason hee made a derne Contract,
Out from his house to make a small passage,
Into the towre where this Queene was in cage,
When this was done, after his owne intent,
This same Mason hee kild incontinent,
That hee should not discouer his secree,
For his reward this workeman this got hee.
Then went this Knight when hee list to the Queene
In secret sort, and with no man was seene,
Did her seruice as could him well effeere,
Then they talked of diuers matters seere,
Among the rest hee spake to her of loue,
Which in a part her heart did greatly moue,
Howbeit as then shee was not well contented,
Yet afterward to his will shee consented:
So in her thought the Queene kest on a day,
Of this matter what shee should doe or say,
Touching the Knight, and als her owne husband,
If such thing knowne, then banishing the land.
So my tinsell and euer worlds shame,
Or vpon mee would bee laid all the blame,
Because that I would not the Knight discure,
Shall bee called the ill woman full sure,
So the Knight hee shall escape no way;

But

The ſeuen Sages.

But of the death the ſharpe hee ſhall eſſay,
Wherefoze is beſt, and I perceauē my ſell,
To hold my tongue, and not a word to tell,
And ſo all times, when they two pleaſde to mēt,
By this derne way they went to their ſecret,
Then afterward the Queene gaue him a Ring,
Which at widdocke ſhe receiued from the King,
Great toznaments this knight hee vſed daylie,
And euer boze away the victorie,
Wherethrough he ſtood both in court and with King
In great fauour for his manly hauing,
Into ſo far that hee was afterward
Made by the King Controller and Steward,
And all his Realme hee hade in regiment,
Tooke in his mailes, graſſe-ſummes and dayly rent.
Upon a day it did appeaſe the King,
For his pleaſure to paſſe vnto hunting,
To his Steward the King gaue then command,
To be ready and paſſe with him fra hand.
Upon the morne then all the Court vproſe,
And with the King all to the hunting goes,
All the long day they chaſe in the Forreſt,
While the King thought they wold haue had ſome reſt
For hee was tyred and wearie all bygane.
So hee repoſde beſide a faire fountaine,
Then his Steward where hee ſate with the King,
After trauell hee fell vpon ſleeping,
And ſo the King perceiued at the laſt,
The Queenes ring vpon his finger faſt,
Which the knight knew by countenance of the king.
What

The seuen Sages.

That hee had seene and marked that each King,
Then to the King with fained countenance,
Hee said, My Lord, this is the verie chance,
A maladie hath tane mee in this tide,
I am so sicke, no more hunting may bide,
Unlesse I get the soner some remead,
I doubt right soze that it shall bee my dead,
Praying your grace that ye would grant mee lieue,
For to passe home, your Grace not for to griue.
Quoth hee, Good friend, if ye please to passe home,
I grant you leue, passe on in Gods Name,
Incontinent hee leapt upon his Horse,
Faining himselfe to haue a sickly corse,
Home to his house into all haste hee rode,
And to the Queene hee past withoutten bod,
Without processe deliuered her the ring,
That shee befoze had gotten from the King,
And told her how the King the same did know,
On his finger, on sleepe when hee him saw,
Beseeching her if that the Kings Grace,
Aske'd for the King within short time or space,
Shee would him shew the same but question
For to exclude ill word and suspicion:
This being done, hee past his priuie way,
And to his bed hee made him but delay.
The hunting done, the King came home at Euen,
Incontinent hee said vnto the Queene,
Where is the King in wedlocke I you gaue,
Shew mee the same, for I the same must haue,
Hee said, My Lord, so sone to what intent?

The seven Sages.

Would yee it see, no way it is absent,
Then said the King, Show mee it incontinent
O: I sweate you yee shall if soe repent,
Then vp shee rose, and to her coffer went,
And brought the King to him incontinent,
When hee it saw, hee was right wonder glade,
And halfe ashamde vnto the Queene hee said,
Madame, forsooth since first houre I was borne,
So like a King by workemen made o: shorne,
To the Knights King and yours I neuer saw,
I would haue swozne but that now I doe know,
Both had bene one, that causde me aske your ring,
Shee said, My Lord, beleue yee such a thing?
Nay, nay, Madame, I cry you now mercie,
For well I know such thing there cannot bee.
Shee said, My Lord, take not such thing in thought
For the same man perchance that your ring wrought
Hath made the Knights, and on the same sorte,
Quoth hee, Madame I said it but in sport.
Quoth shee, my Lord, God not grant you pardon,
If yee mee had in any suspicion:
God forgive your ill suspitious minde,
If yee suspect in any sort o: kinde,
Considering of your Castle the strength,
And my lawtie yee haue knowne at the length,
And then your selfe had the keyes in keeping,
I maruell how yee can suspect such thing,
Quoth hee, Madame, I pray you take patience,
I said nothing for to doe you offence,
But as yee know desire my ring to see,

Which

The seven Sages.

Which now againe ye shall receaue of me,
With as good will as euer I it gaue.
He said, my Lord the same I will receaue;
So afterward ye suspect me no way.
He said, Madame, that shall I not persey:
After this time the knight caused prepare,
In his own house a banquet of dinner,
Then to the King he said, and please your Grace,
This is the trueth, the verie cause and cace,
My bedfellow is come from her countrie,
Which thought right long my presence for to see,
So her I caused a dinner to prepare,
With all my heart I would your Grace were there;
And please your Grace to doe me such honour,
Surely he said, I will doe you pleasure,
In that behalfe, and it were meekles moze,
The knight he knelt, and thanked him therefoze,
Then in his heart he was right wonder glad,
For the kinde words that the King to him said,
Then past he to the Queene incontinent,
By his derne caue the hie way is he went,
And said, Madame, and please you take such paines,
Go to my house to dine with your Soueraine,
This samine day, and cloth you by richly,
This is the vse and guise of my countrey,
And sit thereat at table with the King,
Then as ye were my Wife spous'd with a ring,
And make him all the pastime and good cheare,
As to his Grace in best sort can effere.
He said, Sir Knight as ye please so I will,

The seven Sages.

As best I can your pleasure to fulfill,
The houre became and dinner time of day,
To the knights house, the king came on the way.
In the meane time the Quene came her derne gate,
In the knights hall belue she got her seat,
In such clothing, as the knight gaue command,
After the guise and fashion of his land,
And when the king came to the knights hall,
So soone as he the ladies visage saw,
He thought she was woman likest his Quene,
Since he was borne, that euer he saw with eene,
Yet not the lesse, eachone on their maner.
They hailed other as could them best effere.
Then to the knight the king said quietly,
What is she this so seemelie for to see?
The knight, he said, and please your Maiestie,
This is forsooth my loue and my ladie,
Who of long time from me hath bene absent,
But now I am of her comming content,
So that ye be content that she is heere,
I am (said he) so God grant me good cheare,
And first they wash, and then to table went,
And euermore the king in his intent,
Thought that he knew the Quene, & had knowledge
By her fashion, her forme and her visage,
And to himselfe he said in all his life,
He neuer saw woman more like his wife,
Yet not the lesse the strength of his owne towre,
Deceiu'd his mind, and led him in errour,
That in so far, he gaue far more credence,

To

The seven Sages.

To the Knights words and coloured eloquence,
 Than to the thing he saw with his own eye,
 Which blindly caused him to misknow his Quene.
 When she began to talke of some gladnes,
 And stir the King vp in some merines,
 So soone as he heard her speach and her voyce,
 Whether to speake, or for to hold him close,
 He not well wist, but yet said to himselfe,
 O word in heauen, here is a great maruell,
 This woman is in fashion and fauour,
 In spech, in voyce, makedome and portraiture,
 In behauiour and als in conditions,
 In forme, in face, in maners and fashions,
 And in all sort so done like mine owne Quene,
 In all this world was neuer liker seene,
 And yet the strength of the towre him beguiled,
 With the Knights words that him so fliely seld:
 So at the meat with merines among,
 The knight desired the Quene to sing a song,
 Then she began to sing a song of loue,
 The King hearing, greatly his heart can moue,
 Said to himselfe, and this be not my wife,
 I know she is not liuing vpon life:
 And then againe he thought that can not be,
 For I my selfe in keeping haue the key,
 Of the great towre where no man can come in,
 But I my selfe that keepes both key and gin:
 That no man can enter within that toure,
 Except my selfe neither by time nor houre.
 So all dinner he sate in such conceat.

The seven Sages.

With his owne selfe into such strange debaite,
And so he sat and wist not what to say,
And at the last he had some take away
The table and cloth, he wold no longer byde,
He said he wold about the fields ryde.
Then said the Knight and please your noble grace,
For to remaine an prettie time and space,
We shall you make moze merrines and cheir.
For without doubt your Grace is welcome here.
Then said the Quene, and please your Maiestie,
For to remaine with vs in companie,
We shall you make the merines and sport,
All that we can to hold you in comfort:
Such like as doth the Quene in her solace,
With all seruice that we can doe your Grace,
For all request plainly the king said nay
For to remaine: cause he take the table away,
And said, he was into that samyn tide,
In such fanisie he might no longer bide:
And so the cloth and table away was tane,
Up rose the king, and to the floore is gane:
Thanked the knight of his kindnes and cheare,
The Ladie als into the best maner,
Then in all haste to the castle he went,
To see the Quene if she was there present.
And then the Quene went on her priuie way,
Best off her cloths, and her vncouth array,
And when the king entred within the towre,
He fand the Quene sitting into her bowre,
In the same clothes, and sozt as he her left,

Where

The seven Sages.

Wherethrough he was in his speech halfe bereft:
When hee her saw, hee brac'd her twice or thrise,
And said, Madame, I am in a fanfise,
This day I din'd with the Knight, as yee know,
And with his loue the which I neuer saw,
So like to you by forme or by fashion,
By speech and voyce and also condition,
All dinner time I was so stir'd in thought:
That I wist not if it was yee or nought.
And ay my mind it was in such dispare,
I knew not well if yee were here or there.
Then said the Queene, I maruell of your minde,
That to such thing your heart should be inclin'd,
For yee know well the great strength of your towre.
As to the keyes they are at your pleasure,
And my bodie yee know hath no credence,
To come or gang without your owne licence.
And as yee know to flie I haue no wings,
How can yee then imagine suchlike things?
What kind of way is possible for mee,
For to bee in yon Knights companie,
If euer yee read the Booke of Phisnomic,
Therein yee may right well read and espy,
That it may stand one to bee like another,
Howbeit that one bee not sibbe to the other.
Therefore, my Lord, I you require on right.
Haue no suspect betwixt mee and yon Knight.
Then said the King, Forsooth that shall not bee,
I grant my selfe into this fault guiltie,
Into so far, as I misdoemed you,

The seven Sages.

There is no cause such thing to thinke I trow.
Then said the Quene, sith guiltie y^e you grant,
I you forgiue, so such thing yee not hant.
Upon the morne the Knight said to the King,
And please your Grace yee will grant me one thing,
This long agoe I haue you done seruice,
The best I could pertaining mine office.
Yee see my loue is come from her countrie,
For to returne homeward to cause mee,
And I intend (if it bee your pleasure,
Vnto my loue yee would doe such honour)
To marrie her in face of holy Kirke,
As God commands all Christian men to worke,
To bee at home called my lawfull wife,
While dolefull death doe part vs from this life,
Beseeching so your noble Grace heerefore,
For my reward as now I aske no more:
But with your hand deliuer her to mee,
Before the Priest, that the people may see,
It will bee calde to mee a great honour,
So that it bee your Graces owne pleasure.
Where that my wife was giuen mee by a King,
In our countrie will bee calde a great thing,
In such affaires as is the olde fashion,
Vnto wedlocke when twosome makes them botin.
Then said the King your reward is too small,
That yee desire or charges mee withall:
I will doe that right gladly for your sake,
And for her sake that now should bee your make.
The Knight thanked the King a thousand tise:

Tha

The ſeuen Sages.

That answerde him ſo kindly in ſuch wiſe,
The mariage and day of the banquete,
The King himſelfe cauſed deuife and ſet,
On the which day the King with great honour,
Came to the Church to doe the Knight pleaſure,
The pariſh Prieſt with his Churchly veſtments,
Was well indued in all abillments,
For to ſolemne the band of mariage.
Into the Church as then was the uſage.
In this meane time the Knight cauſed make readie,
In his owne houſe his loue and his Ladie:
Well all clade vp, after the conſuetude,
Of his Countrie which hee thought was moſt good,
And cauſed two Knights, her to the Church conuoy,
With great blithnes ſolemnitie and joy:
For all beleu'd his paramour ſhee had beene,
Whom hee ſaw was indeed their native Quene,
Then ſaid the Prieſt, the which was his duetie,
Who deliuerſ this woman now to mee?
That I againe may giue her to this Knight,
In face of Church, and of the peoples ſight.
Then ſaid the King, That ſhall I doe bedene,
Because ſhee is ſo wonder like my Quene.
I loue her all the better, by my life,
Her face and fauour is ſo done like my wiſe,
As is the uſe of filling of ſuch bands,
The King hee tooke his owne Wiſe by the hands,
And to the Prieſt hee gaue this Ladie bright,
The Prieſt againe gaue her vnto the Knight,
Of holy Church after the old faſhion:

Then

The seven Sages.

Then hee began to read his Orison,
Upon his booke right busily can hee say,
The band compleet hee made betwene them tway.
This beeing done, the Knight said to the King,
Sir, yee haue done to mee a kindlie thing,
With your owne hand that hath deliuered mee,
This noble woman befoze this companie,
My ship wherein wee purpose to passe home,
Is readie now flaxting on the same,
And wee would faine with your Graces licence,
Wee were furdzed homeward for to passe hence,
My Mariners they are in readines,
To take vp sailes, and to the sea them dresse,
Therefore I would your noble Majestie,
With yee haue showane so great kindnesse to mee,
Unto my ship yee would my wife conuoy,
For shee therefore would haue great mirth and ioy,
Considering shee is now to depart,
It would her doe great comfort at the heart,
And als I would yee gaue her good counsell,
All men liuing for to forsake all haill:
But mee alone which is her owne true Knight,
And married her unto your Graces sight,
Then said the King, All such is right goodly,
The married wife obedient to bee,
To her husband and all other refuse,
I haue no doubt but all such shee will vse.
Then went the King with all his companie,
And to the ship conuoyde that faire Ladie,
And by the way his counsell hee her shew,

That

The seven Sages.

That he should be to her knight traist and true,
Him to obey, and hold him in honour,
Loue him alone aboue all creature,
And none liuing in her minde soz to haue,
Whose counsell then I trust she did receiue,
Then the Queene said, And please your Majestie,
This good counsell that yee haue tolde to mee,
It shall bee done, if it were ten times moze.
Quoth he, Madame, now I thanke you therefore,
Praying to God your worshop well conuoy,
So to your land that ye may come with joy,
And then hee take the Quæne first by the hand,
And then the Knight which then was her husband,
And gaue them both his blessing where hæ stood,
Which to the Quæen as she thought, was right good
For at that time she thought it was her part,
Howbeit the King was blinded to the heart.
So first the Quæne and then the noble Knight.
At this blind King either they toke good night.
The King her kiss'd, and bade farewell adew,
So like my wife (quoth he) I neuer knew,
And her fauour will cause mee thinke on you,
When ye are past, this truely yee may trow.
Then said the Quæne low kneeling on her knee,
I thanke your Grace that such thought takes on me,
Doe I not so, when that we are come home,
And thinke on you, I am right far to blame,
For great kindnes and inward courtesie,
That yee haue done to your owne Knight and mee,
This being done, to ship they make passage

Entred

The seven Sages.

Entred in boord, and made for their voyage.
Raised by ancre, and cables in they drew,
The wind was faire, euen as they would, it blew,
Hæsed by sailes and to the sea they past,
The Skipper speelde with speed to the top mast,
To spy the weather, if tempest did appeare,
Into that case the sayles the lower beare,
Within short time the ship was out of sight.
So was the King both quite of Quene and knight,
And then with speed the King homeward he went,
To his Castell, and found the Quene absent,
If he was noyde and craved at his heart,
I know be few of sturt can tell his part,
His face it swate, his feet and hands he shooke,
Upon no man with patience can he looke,
He sought the towre, and spyed all round about,
If he could finde the gate where she got out,
He found the hole and secret way at last,
Where the knight came, and where away she past.
Then cride he out, full wellaway alace,
Here is become a great mischieuous case.
The Knight whom to I gaue such confidence,
Of loue and fauour by counsell and credence:
On him alone I would haue lippened my life,
Now traitrouslly hath tane away my Wife.
I was a foole fulfilde with fantasie,
That gatie more faith vnto his words lie,
Than I did ay to mine own seing eene,
Wherethrough I want my bedfellow and Quene,
And shame for ay with lacke and derision,
Which

The seven Sages.

Which will me bring to greater confusion,
Considering well I had mine eye to see,
All men may well example take by me.

The Emprice then said to the Emperour,
This tale I told, my Lord, for your pleasure,
Would God the same that ye well understood,
Then should ye be of all danger denude.
The Emperour said, Madame, so haue I seele,
All that ye said, I vnderstand right well.
Quoth she, my Lord, remember how this Prince,
Vnto this knight gaue such perfect credence,
Als to his words greater credence he gaue,
Than his own eye, so he did him deceaue,
In like maner vnto these Masters seven,
Ye giue moze faith, than to great God of heauen,
By appearance, for dayly ye may see,
What displeasure these seven would work on me,
He to destroy they labour night and day.

And ye giue faith to each word that they say,
Moze than ye doe to your owne naturall eye,
Which hereafter both will be heard and seene.
Haue ye not seene how your sonne raue my face?
And yet ye giue scarce credence in that case:
Which yet beates still the markes as ye may see,
Whereof as yet I get no remedie:

And als ye know how he would haue me shame,
Defylde your bed, wherethrough I was defam'd.
All this became through his Masters defence,
Whom to ye giue such confirmed credence,
This ye marke not, nor prints into your heart,

But

The seven Sages.

But it noyes me inwardly in a part.
Therefore I doubt right soze the samin thing,
Shall happen you as it did to this King,
That gaue credence while he was quite beguilde,
So is your selfe with these same seven ouersylde.
He said, I giue to mine ene moze credence,
Than to these seven for all their great Science:
Therefore the mozne for all their tales and sawes,
My sonne he shall the iudgement thole of Lawes,
And on the mozne his officers he causde call,
Commanded them that they should forthwithall,
Take out his sonne, and on gallous him hing,
That it were done before each other thing.
Then such a noyse rose vp in the citie,
It for to heare it was a great pitie,
That the Emperour his owne sonne should cause sta,
Within that toun many heart it made wa.
The seuenth Master heard tell of this tythand,
To the Sergeants he hasted him fra hand,
Them for to meet in all good haste him sped,
Where they the Child downe through the citie led,
Quoth he, good friends hartly I you beseake,
Tarie a time while I the Emperour speake,
I trust to God ere I be far away,
I shall his life from perill saue this day,
The officers they were right wonder glad,
And did euen so as the Master them bade.
To the Emperour he hasted through the towne,
And on his knees before him he fell downe,
Rendering him such reuerence as accords,

Then

The seven Sages.

Then after him to his Princes and Lords.

The Emperour with great indignation,
Vengeable vult, and with browes casten downe,
Said vnto him, All sorow mot thee fall,
Both vnto thee, and to thy fellows all:

A dumbe young child yee seuen vnto mee sent,
Which spake right well when hee vnto you went.
Because yee seuen haue sent mee such one hither,
Hee and yee shall bee all hang'd together.

The Master said, And please your Noble Grace,
from now to morne it is but a short space,
And then by noone with grace of God of Heauen,
Your sonne shall speak, we and his Masters seuen,
Vnto your Grace wee promise faithfully,
On poine of death, first wee all seuen then hee.

The Emperour said, If I might that beleene,
No longer then desired I for to liue,

The Master said, I pray you bide so long,
And if wee faile all eight ye shall vs hang:
Then openlie yee shall know all the strife,
And dissention betwixt vs and your wife.

And if your Grace will not doe as I say,
Wee will repent right so: another day,
And shall happen to you perchance some night,
As it bechanc'd to a right courteous Knight.

That died shortly, as I in storie read,
For a small blood that hee saw his wife bleed,
To whom after shee was right vncourteous:
And right vnkinde for all his great kindnes.

The Emperour said, Master, I you require,

The Ienen Sages.

Tell mee that tale right faine I would it heare,
The Master said, Cause call your sonne againe,
The whole storie I shall show to you plaine,
In time comming induring all your life,
Wee shall eschew the shrewdnes of your Wife.
The Emperour said, I will call him againe,
Conditionally vnder the samine paine,
The morne ere none, speake not hee plainly,
First hee, then yee together all shall die,
The Master said Of that I am content,
The Emperour said, And thereto I consent:
Then caused hee to call the childe againe,
And the Master told forth his tale in plaine,
But the Queenes last tale further ere wee goe,
Wee will perceiue ere wee tell any moe.

MORALITAS.

I Nto this tale right small I can perceauē,
To be extract of morall good sentence,
But that this Knight subtilly did deceauē,
This noble King that gaue him such credence,
In fundrie sorts shew him beneuolence,
Then hee againe vpon the other side,
With great falsset all his wayes did prouide.

As to our Queene as shee infers this tale,
To her purpose and to her owne affaires,
As thinketh mee, the matter tendeth hiale,
To her shame as the tale it selfe declares,
For to tell forth plainly shee not spares,
And to rehearse the whoredome that was hid,
Betwixt the Knight and the Queene that they did,

Consider

The seuen Sages.

Considering that they are Queenes baith,
Who can her quite such matters to in bring,
None hath shame, it is the others skaith,
Nor to be false to her husband the King,
I trow ye but our Emprice can doe such thing,
Indeed I trow ere all our bookes be ended,
Wee shall perceaue as far shee hath offended.

If a Doctour into his sermon tell,
And reprove vice, great faults, or great error,
Of the same vice being guiltie him self,
How shall hee snib that vice with his honour?
Hee blots himselfe as hee doth his neighbour,
Alwayes vpon his owne blanket he spits,
And his owne tale hard on the heeles him hits,

Of my neighbour an ill tale if I tell,
Of blasphemie, dishonour or yet shame:
May perchance likewise come to my self,
Perhappin worse, bringing on as great blame,
How can I then in any sort defame
Mine owne neighbour, except my selfe bee cleene,
Which thing should be considered and well seene.

Our owne Emprice whom of that wee now speake,
He put reproach vnto another Queene,
At shee may cast her cards in at the cleake,
Of the same sort, thought now such be not seene,
As MATTHEW sayes, euen so as now I meene,
From thin owne eye first draw thou out the balke,
To thy neighbour then peartly thou may talke,
Therefore I say thou had need for to see,
If thou a fault into thy neighbour send,
If such like faults see thou well purged bee,
To reprove ere that thou take on hand,

The seuen Sages.

Else thy reproofe with honour cannot stand;
It to obey there is few will bee able,
If that bee knowne in the same culpable.

How can our Queene so foule a fact infer,
Contrare a Queene, and shee her selfe guiltie?
In the same crime, yea and perchance far war,
Howbeit it bee clocked more quietly?
Fy on faller, fy on hid harlotrie,
That an ill tale of thy neighbour canst tell,
And the same tale redounds euen on thy sell.

A reproach to the Emprice.

THou glaiked gallerād Queen now with thy glorious glōse
With thy false tales of teene thou trowes to win the hōse
Nay, nay, not so, my joyes, there is some graith to find,
A pricke into your nose, ere wee haue done behind,
Thinkes thou to blow vs blind? there other tales to tell,
When stabled is all the wind, looke then who beares the bell.
The wracke shall on thy selfe, both the sorrow and syte.
Thou Proserpine of Hell, wee cure thee not a myte.
For all thy great despite hid ouer with harlotrie,
Full well wee shall thee quite, that all the world may see,
Thou Bismere bellamie, thine hips shall thole hote haisters,
For thou serues them truly at the Child and his Masters.

The Tale of the fift Master.

VPon a time there was a poble Knight,
That had a Wife that was both faire & bright
Whome hee so lōned, that by no way hee might,
Of the whole day an houre want of her sight,
Upon a time after meat and gladnesse,

The Leuen Sages.

For their pastime these two went to the Ches,
And in his hand it hapned him to haue,
His own byknife, and so among the laue,
Thereon she strake her hand a litle wие,
Almost a drop of blood that ye might see,
So soone as he the blood saw of his Wife,
Alwayes he said that she would losse her life,
Before them all among them fell he downe,
For very woe into a deadly swoun.
Incontinent then she began to cast,
Upon his face cold water very fast,
Then he ouercame within a litle space,
The cold water they wapt so in his face,
The Minister he causde call of the town,
And prayed him to heare his confession,
For well he knew, without any remead,
There was nothing to him but onely dead,
For no sickness, nor for none other deed,
But onely saw his Wifes fingers blood.
The Minister exhorted him anone,
And soone after to death this knight is gone:
For whom there was great hurt and bewailing,
Among the rest his Wife made most mourning,
The Buriall with great solemnitie,
Was made and done in best maner might be:
Then did this Ladie make a solemne vow,
To liue ay still as doth the turtle doue,
All her lifetime to liue in chastitie,
And nener to know any mans companie.
But ay ly still vpon her husbands graue,

The seven Sages.

And neuer more worldly comfort to haue,
But euermore vnto the day she die,
In that same graue while that she buried be,
Her friends said, nay, that was not all the best,
Sith it please God her husband was at rest,
Wade her passe home, and cast her to defend
Her spouse & bairnes, to mourne wold nothing mend,
Giue to the poore, and let the dead hence goe,
We thinke it best (quoth they) that ye doe so,
We shall you doe all comfort that we can,
Then afterward to choose you a new man,
Cast you to mirth, and let your mourning be,
For naturall is that all men once must die,
She said, counsell of you none will I haue,
For I will die widow aboue this graue,
Consider can ye not how for my sake,
He soze sicknes and dulefull death did take,
For a small drop he saw my finger bleed.
Should I not then both into word and deed?
On my person some pennance for to take,
The cruell death that suffered for my sake?
Therefore, good friends, ye put your minds to rest,
For on this graue shall be my ludge and nest,
While God sunder my soule and life in tway:
Wherefore, my friends, from me pass home alway.
Then her neare friends hearing her bitter mind,
Thought in some part they wold with her inclinde
Because she was in sturt and great dolour,
Wold cast them then some way to her pleasure,
And saw she wold doe nothing but her will,
Where

The seven Sages.

Wherefore they sought the same so; to fulfill,
And cause to big even at the graues side,
A proper Iudge wherein that she might bide,
And furnish'd her all necessaries thereto,
In all affaires, o; what she had ado,
Believing well she would change her intent,
And afterward to worke with friends consent,
Thinking right well that she would no way want
Sight of people, but she thereto would hant.
So they her left into her quiet case,
Mourning right sore about her husbands graue,
There was a law then made in that citie,
If any man condemned was to die,
On the gallous so; trespassse and vnrigh:
Then the Shireffe should wake him all that night,
In his harnesse the mozne while it were day,
So that the thiefe should not be stolne away:
And if so were, the Shireffe to fine his land,
And als his life to be in the Kings hand.
In this meane time it hapned that there was,
A man hanged so; his theft and trespassse.
Then the Shireffe behou'd that night of force,
All in armour to wake that hanged corse,
And so he did, howbeit the night was cold,
Where he watched, there was no house o; hold.
It chanc'd that night to be both winde and raine,
That in no sort thereout he might remaine,
So; very cold he stood of life such doubt,
And so beline he blenked him about,
In the Church-yard beside the Knights graue,

The seven Sages.

A litle light the Shireffe can perceave,
From the window whereat the widow lay,
Wither he goes in all the haste he may,
At the ludge dore he knocked quietly,
And sone she spake, and askde who may that be,
This time of night to waken a poore widow?
All woe begone, in heart right sorrowfow.
He said, I am the Shireffe of this toun,
For very cold I am in point to swoun:
Except ye let me in right hastely,
For very cold doubtlesse I trow to die.
If ye come in (quoth she) I feare right soze,
That ye shall eake my anguish moze and moze:
Which were needelesse, sir, if ye knew my thought,
Quoth he, Ladie, forsooth that shall I noght,
I promise you neither in word nor deed,
You for to craib, therefore haue you no dreed.
Then vp she rose, and belue let him in,
For very cold he cheuered at the chin,
And downe he sate, and warm'd him at the fire,
Which for to doe was greatly his desire,
Fra he was warme, and rested there a space,
Graithly be blent into the widowes face.
Quoth he (Lady) to displease you no way,
A word with leue I would vnto you say.
She said (good sir) say on what euer you please,
For your sayings can doe me no disease.
He said (Lady) I maruell of your minde,
To this vaine worke that ye should be inclinde,
Considering ye are a faire Ladie,

Fresh

The seven Sages.

Fresh in your floures, young, pleasant and luffie,
It were moze meet and better by ten-fold,
For to passe home and keepe your owne Household,
Then heere to bide, and your selfe to destroy,
Daylie in sturt, in mourning and in noy,
Quoth she (good sir) if I your words had knowne,
Or that yee should such sayings to mee showane,
Yee should not had into this house entrie,
Because yee talke of such purpose to mee,
I say to you as I said of befoze
To all my friends, and I would yee no moze,
Spake of such things, they sinke not in mine head,
Know yee not well mine husband suffred dead,
For a small drop hee saw my finger bleed,
Then thinke yee not that I should doe some deed,
For him againe, and take some small pennance,
That might mee cause of him haue remembrance:
Therefore I shall him loue on such a wise,
That I must loue the graue wherein hee lyes,
And for his sake such pennance take on mee,
That where hee lyes aboue I shall die,
Then the Shireffe tooke leaue and vp hee rose,
The neereft gate vnto the gallous goes:
And when hee came, the thiefe that hee left there,
Was stolne away, whereof hee made great care,
And said oft times, what haue I done alace?
Heere is to mee become a carefull cace,
My goods, my geare, and also all my land,
My life likewise is in the Kings hand.
So hee wandring in sturt both to and fro,

The seven Sages.

And knew not what to say for very woe
So at the last he thought that he would passe,
To the Ladie before where that hee was:
Because shee was so deuote in her sell,
Hee trow'd of her to haue some good counsell:
Then came he on about the first cocke,
And at the doore quietly did hee knocke,
Quoth she, Who is that, that so soone calleth now?
I the Shireffe is come againe to you,
I haue a sturt and anger at mine heart,
And I would shew thereof to you some part:
Wherefore heartly I pray you let mee in,
I shall you shew the matter more and min,
Howbeit it was to her some prettie paine,
Yet vp shee rose, and let him in againe,
Then hee began, the case all for to tell,
Quoth hee, Ladie, I come to haue counsell
Of you, because I wote right well yee know,
When any man is hanged by the law,
Mine office is to keepe him night and day,
To that effect hee bee not stolne away,
And if hee bee, my life and all my lands,
Without remead is in the Kings hands.
It is so chanc'd when I was here right now,
In the same time when I talked with you.
The thiefe which I should haue waked while day,
Some subtle hands hath stollen him away,
Wherethrough I will incurre the Kings fead,
Losse all my lands and also tine mine head:
Or els on force forth of the Realme to fle,

Which

The seven Sages.

Which is but doubt an heauie cace to mee,
Beseeching you your counsell giue mee to,
Into this cace what yee thinke best to doe.
Quoth shee, Good sir, for you mine heart is woe,
That such mischance should happ en on you so,
But since yee haue made your first mone to mee,
I must you helpe, defend, and als supplie,
So should kindnesse, courtesie and reason,
Of a woe heart to haue compassion.
Quoth hee. Lady, I lippen on you no lesse,
But for to haue your counsell and kindnes,
Because yee are in great estimation,
An wit, wisedome, and als deuotion,
And I beleue to haue your counsell now,
For all my cause cleene I commit to you,
For it is said, first since the worlde began,
There is great helpe into a good woman.
This Ladie then was moued with mercie,
And on this Knight her heart had great pitie,
And shee said, Sir, your sturt it moues mee,
But take good heart, and yee shall helped bee,
Doe my counsell, and shortly to conclude,
Ye shall neither lose your life lands, nor good.
Hee said, Ladie, that earand brought mee heere,
To saue my life, my lands, my goods and geere,
Quoth shee, good sir, will yee say faithfully,
When I haue done, that yee will marrie mee,
I will doe all that I haue to you said,
Quoth hee, Ladie, of that I would bee glad,
Would God in heauen to mee yee would so doe.

That

The seven Sages.

That I might bee your person fellow to,
Considering I am but a poore Knight,
And yee a Ladie of great blood and might,
Would yee disdain to humble your minde to mee,
I should you serue with all humilitie.
So both their minds and all their whole intent,
Was well agreeed, whereof they were content,
Good sir, thes said, yee know right well I wate,
How mine husband was buried of the late,
Who loued mee so wonder well indeed,
That for a drop hee saw my finger bleed,
Hee tooke in heart such sturt and displeasure,
Of dulefull death hee suffred the sharpe shoure,
Goe take him vp for to bee your reliefe,
And hang him vp where hanged was the thiefe,
The Shireffe said, Faire Ladie, by the rude,
Your counsell is substantiall and good.
Then past they both boldly with mane and might,
Out of the graue they tooke this new dead Knight,
The Shireffe said, yet one thing feareth mee,
The thiefe which I caused hing vpon the tre,
Two of his tæth aboue was stricken out,
Therefore I stand into a dreadfull doubt,
If any man the samine should perceiue,
That this dead corse his tæth aboue doe haue,
It were my death, and called great deceit,
What for to doe hereof not well I wait.
Shee said, Your selfe may that right well remead,
I giue you lieue, strike thre out of his head,
Quoth hee, Ladie, to that I were right loth,

The seven Sages.

For of knighthead it is against the othe,
Either yolden or dead men for to strike,
It would greatly both faith and fame infect,
And als when he was living here on life,
Except onely my children and wedded Wife,
I lou'd him best of any man liuand,
Therefore in him I can not put my hand.
If ye will not ding them out then, said she,
Faith for your loue the same thing I will do,
So with a stone two of his tēth outdang,
Thē bade the Shireffe hing him where the thief hāg
The Shireffe said, yet I feare one great thing,
The thiefe which I on the gallous causde hing,
A hideous wound he gotē in his forehead,
At his taking they had him at such fead,
And both his lugges they stowed quite him fra,
And your husband be he not euen right sa,
It should be my destruction hastily,
In this matter I pray you counsell me,
Among the rest (quoth she) that's but a bourd,
Can not your selfe peartly draw out your sword,
On the forehead strike him as best effeeres,
When that is done, then cut off both his eares,
Quoth he (Ladie) from that God me defend,
Considering vnto his liues end,
I lou'd so well, and had in companie,
In that behalfe I pray you pardon me,
And as befoze I did to you declare,
Of clene knighthead the oth it is contrare,
Giue me your sword (quoth she) and for your loue,

That

The seven Sages.

What same to doe, now pearthlie shall I proue,
She tooke the sword, and to the man was dead,
A cruell strake she gaue him in the head.
With the same sword into her great despite,
Of both his lugges belue she made him quite:
Then said, good sir, now ye may without tary,
But any feare him to the gallous cary,
And hing him vp where the thiefe hang befoze:
So are ye quite of danger, sturt and thore.
Then said the Shireff, yet one thing rests in thought
Wherefore while now remembrance had I nought,
Howbeit the thiefe was whole in bolck and bones.
Yet well I wote he wanted both his stones,
And be that known, all is for nought that's done.
Quoth she, in faith the stones he shall want sone,
And with a knife the stones she tooke him fra,
And said, good sir, now to the trees him ta,
He cumbers vs for to bide so long here.
Quoth he, my selfe alone dow not him beare.
Quoth she, in faith for that it shall not stop,
Take ye the taile, and I shall take the top,
For since he came out from his sepulture,
I haue him made a lothfull creature,
To the gallous these two tooke him but more,
And hanged him where the thiefe hang befoze.
Then was the Shireffe of the Kings danger quite,
By the great helpe of this Lady so white.
Then said she, sir, now very well ye knaw,
How that ye were by order of the Law,
Both life and lands in danger for to tine,

And

The setten Sages.

And now I haue brought all to a good fyne,
By my counsell, and onely for your loue,
For your pleasure, and als for your behoure:
Wherefore since ye in all matters haue sped,
Now I desire againe ye would me wed,
Conforme to your condition and promise,
Which in no sort I know ye will not mis.
He said, forsooth Ladie, I made a vow,
That I should not marrie woman but you,
So long as ye were liuing vpon life,
But woe to him that hath thee to his wife,
Thou shamelesse shrew, and most wicked of all,
Tenefull tyger, a vengeance thee befall:
A noble knight thou had to thy husband,
And for a drop of blood forth of thy hand,
He had such loue yea inward loue to thee,
For sturt thereof at short cause he to die,
Thou in no wise all his loue regarding,
His foremost teeth truely thou did out ding,
In his forehead a fell wound did thou strike.
Cutted his lugges, and als his stones such like,
When I thinke on this vgsome villanie,
God me preserve that I not marrie thee,
And for that cause I find thee so cruell,
To him alone, that loued thee so well,
In time comming thou canst no better be,
To any man that would lay loue on thee:
Wherefore I thinke that thou shalt shame no ma.
In time comming, mine owne hands shall thee sla.
And so at short he put her there to dead,

The seuen Sages.

He drew his sword, and quite strake off her head.
The Master then said to the Emperour,
Sir, I require if it be your pleasure,
If that ye haue the words of this tale tane.
The Emperour said, yea, Master euery ane,
She was a Wife, the worst and most cruel,
That I before of any yet heard tell,
The Shireffe als rewarded her the thing,
That she deseru'd to her deedes according,
Yet good Master, heartly I you beseeke,
That I may once my sonne blithly heare speake,
For that would make such blithnes to my heart,
From that time forth, I care not to depart.
He said, my Lord, and please your Maiestie,
That thing the morne ye shall both heare and see,
At your pleasure, as your selfe doth desire,
In audience before the whole Empire,
And shall know well the cause of unkindnes,
Betwixt vs seuen, your sonne and the Empryce,
The Emperour said, if that thing come to passe,
When your reward shall be what ye will as.
He said, my Lord, all is at your pleasure,
So tooke his leaue then from the Emperour.

M O R A L I T A S.

INto this tale that the Doctour hath told,
We may perceauē sentences manifold,
Pertaining to womens vnstablenes,
First their owne will to haue ay that they would,
That causde her big about the graue a hold,
For to make knowne her fained holines,
Which soone was turned to babish bruckilnes,

Consider

The seven Sages.

Consider then how that shee was so bold,
In diuers sorts and shew her cruelnesse,

First she her shew to be in estimation,
A chaste widow, and liue in deuotion,
In godly prayer, and into almes deed,
Which soone was rurne in great dissimulation;
Of her owne spouse that made such mutilation,
Who died because hee saw her finger bleed,
What gaue shee him for his good word and meed:
His stones and lugges, shee stowed, and teeth out dang;
Then on the Gallous as a thiefe did him hang:

Here is her loue, here is her stablenes,
Here is her fauour, here is her faithfulness;
Here is her chastnesse, here is her charitie,
Her courtesie, here is all her kindnesse,
Her womanhead, loe here is her meeknes,
Here is her hope, here is her honestie,
Here is her grace, here is her grauitie,
Here is her gansell, here is all her goodnes;
Now all is changed into keene crueltie,

O marueilous God, what may this matter meane,
That women are so cruell and so keene,
And euer giuen to wickednes and vice,
In former time euermore so hath beene,
And in no sort can yet therefra absteene,
But perseuers, there is a matter nice,
I thinke it best to play them at the dice:
The neereft way in this world is / weene,
To saue their shame, set them on snike and sice,

Where should bee faith, there shew they fainednes,
And where fauour, they show vnfaithfulness:

Where

The seven Sages.

Where should be rest, they rattle ay in a rane,
Where loue should be, there shew they bitternes,
Where peace should be, there shew they vp boldnesse,
Where goodnes is, their ludging haue they nane,
Where teene and tray, that house is to them rane,
Where meeknesse is, then are they ay menlesse,
O married men for you / make great mane.

For why? your heads are still bound to a stake,
And though yee doe all yee doe for her sake,
As you becomes both into word and deed,
And so dayly on her seruice doe vaike,
Shee countes not all your cunning worth a caike,
When euer shee craibes, or casts backward the creed,
Euen as the Knight saw his wifes finger bleed,
In loues labour when euer that yee inlake,
All things bygone shee counts not worth a thread.

Because they are so kittle of the kame,
Whiles like a wilde Wolfe, whiles as a Doue as tame.
In at bosome, and then out at your sleiue,
Such soulelesse things haue neither sinne nor shame,
Then wee doe wrong any wise them to blame,
They will doe nought that will their husband grieue,
Nor scarcely speake vnlesse hee giue her lieue,
Such innocents that know of nought but ill,
They couet nought, but ay to haue their will.

Some maks so moy, so gimp, so dinke and dane,
Howbeit ye speake, she will not blenke againe,
And if she doe, it is out on the side,
That Fillocke would bee at the field as fane,
That seemes a Sainct, now fend vs from Sathan,
Though shee be brawld and busked like a Bride,
Vnder colour she is a gracelesse guide,

A foole

The seuen Sages.

A foole fulfild of fantasie prophane,
A rancke rebalde readie all times to ride.

Yee good women example here may see,
Bee not fained with false hypocrisie,
In mens sight presenting an Angell,
And then inward satiat with crueltie,
Fulfilled with all fraud and falsitie:
All this it comes of the great Deuill of hell,
Who daylie sets his courage for to quell
All mankinde, with his kene crudelitie,
So women doe, as now no more I tell.

A praise to the seuenth Master.

THou hast, Doctour, put off a doubtfull day,
The seuenth and last wherein most perill lay,
And sau'd the Childe vnto the morne at noone.
Now in Gods Name let him come on away.
To the Emprice if hee hath ought to say,
To say it out I thinke it were well done,
For shee hath beene to him right importuone,
In his contrare shee hath done that she may,
To cause him misse both dinner and disjoone.

An Exclamation to the Childe.

NOW since thou speakes on her thou wraoke thee well,
If thou hast cause thy selfe thou hast some feele,
Thanke her no more than thou had hanged beene,
If thou hast hap, now hit her on the heele,
And spare her not though shee were stiffe as Steele,
For shee hath beene to thee right wonder keene,

T

Which

The seven Sages.

*Which in no sort pertained to a Queene,
On such a Wise a young Clarke to cause kill,
Who neuer wrought to her tray nor teene.*

How *Dioclesiane* on the Emprice complained,
And him excusde of all the matter shee meande

After that the seven Masters all about,
Had sau'd this child of all danger and doubt,
By good reasons of stories heard and sene,
Upon the mozne together did conuene,
To a counsell, to see how well they might,
Conuoy this child vnto his fathers sight,
And from prison how best they should him bring,
All to consult they past for the same thing,
So to prison they came with one consent,
To speake this Child before the none they went.
His opinion and counsell for to heare,
What hee wanted that they seven should him leare
Right well beeseene in honest ornament,
Of his Masters twosome before him went,
And on each side, of his Masters went one,
And three behind, and so forward are gone,
And fourteenemen in their companie went.
Eachone playing on diuerse instrument.
And euerie one was Masters in Musicke,
For melodie and mirth there was none like,
To the Palace this childe they did conuoy,
With great blithnesse, mirth, melodie and joy,
So that the sound of all the Instruments,
And the great noise in at the windowes went.

What

The seven Sages.

What was the noyse the Emperour did demand,
They said, it was his sonne comming at hand,
Unto your Grace soz to excuse him sell,
Of part of plaints which some did to you tell.
The Emperour said, these tythings likes me,
By sonne speaking if I might heare or see,
In the palace this young Childe toke entresse,
Whereof many made mirth and merinesse:
And when he came to his Fathers presence,
He hailed him with duely reuerence,
With honour, fauour and all humilitie,
As him became, or could of courtesie,
The companie, and all about was glad,
With great gladnes to his father he said,
Haile Father deare, health, honour, and well fare,
Be to your Grace soz now and euermare:
So soone as he of his sonne heard the voyce,
Into his heart it did him so reioyce,
That his great loue his wits it did confound,
That he soz ioy flatlings fell to the ground.
Then vp againe his sonne toke him in haste,
And diuers times in his armes he him bzaist:
So with sweet words and comfoztable bzaicing:
From swoon againe he did his Father bring,
Awake from swoon as the Emperour did wake,
The Childe began to his Father to talke:
Yet of people there was such confluence,
The Childe to speake could scarce get audience,
The Emperour caused casten soz to be,
Great summes of gold out thzough the whole citie.

The seven Sages.

To that effect to draw the people away,
That he might heare what thing his son would say
Of the money yet few tooke small regards
That the young man so fane they wold haue heard
The Emperour cried, giue Audience,
On paine of death each man to keepe silence,
Then all was close, to speake there durst no man,
Then for to speake Dioclesiane began.

I My Father deare, humblie I you beseeke,
That yee will cause ere I moe words doe speeke,
Your owne Emprice with her faire Ladies gent,
At my sermon eachone to bee present,
The Emperour incontinent gaue command,
That the Emprice should hither come fra hand,
With her Ladies of her chamber eachone,
To her in haste the messenger is gone,
In right great haste the messenger shew her till,
The Emperour his whole command and will.
Shee hearing that, strake in a fellon feare,
Was no remead, but all they must compeare,
Then did the Childe desire the Emperour,
That all the Ladies of the Emprice Bour,
Should stand in rowe eachone at others side,
On paine of death, that none should themselfe hide
That the people might all them plainlie see,
Their trim makedome, and als their honestie,
Their fauour, face, their fame and fashon,
Their bzaiue hauings, and their painted person,
Upon the dase these saints when they were dziuen,
They were most like Angels come out of heauen.

The

The seven Sages.

They were so sweet, some said, they were all Saints,
True men them calde as trim as termigants.
Then stood they vp all into plaine presence,
Unto the Child gaue open audience.
Then said the Child, Father, lift vp your eene,
Behold how long that ye haue blinded beene,
With your Emprice that is your married Quene,
And that young wench that is all clad in greene,
Which is Your maide vnto your owne Emprice,
Whom she hath more in fauour and kindnes,
Than euer she had, I dare well take on me,
Since they first met, vnto your Haiestie,
Whom I desire, if that it pleasde your Grace,
To be vnclad befoze you in this place,
That being done, right well ye shall perceaue,
Such a Your maid, and such Emprice ye haue.
To whom answered this noble Emperour,
Thou knowest, sonne, it is not mine honour,
It will be shame to me and to vs all,
A naked maid befoze vs soz to call.
Then said the Childe, a maiden if she be,
All the great shame thereof be laid on me:
If she be not a young maid, as ye tell,
Then let all shame remaine still with her sell.
The Emperour then commanded that be done,
The officers they vnbeklad her sone,
Her clothes off tane, it well appeared than,
It was no maid, but alwayes was a man,
And by all signes of members naturall,
Whereof many had wonder great maruell.

The seuen Sages.

Then said the sonne with all humilitie,
The very trueth, Father, now may ye see,
Of the falsset, and the great subtlenes,
Of this rebald, and als of your Empryce,
How day and night in blindnes they you led,
When they best thought haue ay desylde your bed,
In your chamber ay vsde such harlotrie.
Fornication, whozedome and Adulterie,
Not regarding Gods Law, nor conscience,
Nor your dreadour, your loue nor reuerence,
But euermore their lust and their pleasure,
Tooke when they list, to your great dishonour,
When the Emperour saw all the veritie,
How this young man was clad as a Lady,
And vsde nightly in chamber with the Quene,
For very wꝛath, impatience and teene,
His eene they glowꝛde, and als his face it swellit,
His great anger ther's no man that can tell it.
He commanded them both incontinent,
Without mercy to be condemn'd and burnt.
Then said the sonne, Father, remaine a time,
While I repꝛoue her of her cruell crime,
She laid on me, and falsly on me brought,
The thing which I had neuer in minde nor thought
The Father said, that thing and all the rest,
Is in your hand, doe with it as ye thinke best.
Then said the sonne, a lyer if she be,
Then let the law correct her for her lie:
But ye shall know, when first ye for me sent,
My selfe I past, and spied the firmament:

Where

The seven ages.

Wherein I saw a word if that I spake,
Within seven dayes, that I with shame and lake,
Should thole the dead with all great crueltie,
By any way that could deuised bee,
And that alone by the great fore-thought seed.
Of the Emprice imagining mine dead:
That was the cause, Father, I durst not speake:
Therefore pardon at you now heere I seeke,
And where shee sayes, that I would her opprest,
In trueth that is a lesing manifest.
But truely shee did all that in her was,
In euerie sort to bring that thing to passe,
And when shee saw that I refus'd such thing,
And answered not, incontinent shee did bring,
Paper and pen, with inke shee had readie,
Prayde mee to write, my minde there quietlie,
And when I wrote, and all her mind refused,
And prayed her for to hold mee excused:
For I would not defile my Fathers bed,
Then the writing vnder her fecte shee tread:
Then raue her face, and all her robes rent,
And with loud voice shee cride incontinent,
And yet that crime shee laid alone on mee:
Father, in trueth this is the veritie,
When the Emperour this tale heard to him told,
The Quenes face greatly he did behold,
With awsome vult, angrie and als austere,
And not but cause, saying on this maner,
O most filthie and shamelesse creature,
Might thou no wise stanchd thy foule nature

The seven Sages.

With my bodie, and with thy rebald knaue,
But in like sort mine own sonne thou wouldst haue,
O wicked Wife neuer taking regard,
Of thine owne shame, nor of heavenly reſtard,
Had thou tane heed of whom thou had deſcended,
Thou would neuer ſo fare to mee offended:
Thou wrought alwayes that euer thou could inuent
On the gallous to cauſe my ſonne bee ſhent.
And ay thy mind with falſet was infected:
Truſting all time ſuch ſhould not bee corrected,
But God is juſt, howbeit hee thole a time,
As hee thinkes good hee will puniſh the crime,
Therefore becauſe of ſuch thou haſt no ſhame,
Upon thy ſelfe ſhall ly both wite and blame,
That mee ſo long thy bedfellow haſt blinded.
Therefore thy fleſh for ſuch faults now ſhall find it,
Then grufſings ſwith ſhee fell vpon her face,
Downe at his knee, and at him cride for grace,
Saying, God Lord, for thy princelie pitie,
To mee moſt vile thou would grant ſome mercie:
For my great guilt here plainelie I confeſſe,
Grant mee ſome grace, for thy great gentleneſſe,
Then to her ſaid this noble Emperour,
Who was fulſilde with ſturt and diſpleaſure,
O vile woman, for mercie thou doeſt craue,
Which by no way thou art worzhie to haue,
The cruell death thou haſt deſerued thyſe,
Which I ſhall ſhow by three maner of wayes,
Firſt thou haſt done the ſinne of Adulterie,
To the great ſhame and contemptiō of mee:

Which

The feuen Sages.

Which by the law expresse is no remead,
A Princes bed for to defile but dead.
Then secondlie mine onelie sonne and Air,
Thou did prouoke to bee Adulterar,
For that effect to the chamber him led,
With thee to lye, and to defile my bed,
Which serueth death, as no man can excuse,
Howbeit the same in trueth hee did refuse.
Lastlie each day with false tales tysted mee,
Contrare Justice to cause mine owne sonne die,
Because thou knew his Cleargie and cunning,
Thy foule baudzie and filthines would out bring,
Wherefore by law thou serues punisht to bee,
Dea of all law to haue extremitie.
Then said the sonne, Father, right well yee know,
How thee daylie tysted you (not by law)
But with her tales, and fained false lxxsing,
Upon gallous but mercie mee to hing,
Were not thzough helpe of my good Masters seuen,
And first supplie of the great God of Heauen,
Which will euer the innocent defend,
And into need will to them succour send,
Which presentlie hee hath to mee now done,
Into my need hath send mee succour sone,
Also Father, I trust it was you told,
By your Emprice that I purposde and wold
Deprue your Grace, from this noble Empire,
Which neuer was yet truelie my desire:
And als thee said, that it was mine intent,
You to destroy with my Masters consent.

And

The seuen Sages.

And by that way your robes for to obtaine,
Which truelie yet my mind did neuer meane,
Such for to doe, I pray God mee defend,
Or yet thinke such vnto my liues end,
For of your Grace my lining all I haue.
But yet on life I ought no more to craue.
I am your sonne, and yet my father deare,
Would I you want for anie worldly geare,
Nay, nay, no so, for I shall ay labour,
For to vphold your welfare and honour,
At my power and vtter diligence,
With heart and hand and all good reuerence,
At your pleasure, your bidding and command,
Lasting your life ay constant shall I stand,
But your Emprice shee wrought both night and day
In all kin sort, to worke betwene vs tway,
As the father kest his sonne into the sea.
Because his sonne told him for veritie,
That hee should bee aboue his Father Lord,
To the which tale the father could not cord.
Then the father kest the sonne in the sea,
But the great God gaue him helpe and supplie,
And would not thole that time hee should bee dead.
But through his grace hee send him sone remead,
Yet the sonnes tale it came truely to passe,
And the Father not one mite worse hee was,
To his father what hinderance could it be,
Howbeit his sonne had obtained dignitie,
Not hindering the father in no sort,
I thinke it should haue beene to his comfort,

The seven Sages.

And Godwilling, Father, my gouernance,
He shall perceauē shall be no hinderance,
For preiudice in no sort to your Grace,
But alwayes shall be mirth, ioy and solace,
Then said on high this noble Emperour,
To God alone be louing and honour,
That such a sonne vnder seru'd hath me send,
To guide this Realme after my dayes end,
So wise, so good, so vertuous in all thing,
To great welfare so able this Realme to bring:
Now my deare sonne, hartly I thee require,
Tell me some tale that all about may heare,
Wherethrough they may thy wisdomē vnderstand.
Quoth he, father, that shall I take on hand,
Do ye command all men to keepe silence,
While I haue done, and giue me audience:
When I haue done, as ye thinke expedient,
On your Empryce then ye giue forth iudgement.
Then silence was commanded to all man,
Dioclesian thus wise his tale began.

After Titan had tane his staffe in hand,
And lightly lap as Lord out ou'r the land,
Because the day was both sweet, soft and fair,
Then vp I rose, and past to my Libzair,
And studied there a while as I thought good,
Because it was my vse and consuetude,
And so after my lesson was compleete,
Then to refresh and recreat my spirit,
As for that time I laid aside my booke,

And

The seven Sages.

And in mine hand a litle volume tooke,
Of lighter dyle, and stories of the old,
That our Elders before-time haue vs told.
In which volume diuerse stories ou'rkest,
That pleasant was, but yet among the rest,
A fine fable into that volume I fand,
Which at this time to our purpose may stand,
This was the maich of the matter indeed,
As ye shall heare this tale, so I proceed.

BEfore this time there was a noble knight,
Manly in mind, and abundant in might,
A gay Ladie he had vnto his wife,
And betwixt them they led a godly life.
Onely one sonne he had, no bairnes mo.
Whom of they tooke great blithnes, mirth and io,
And him deliuered in far and strange countrie,
Him to instruct, and for to learne Cleargie,
Of cunning men that Cleargie had perquere,
As ye haue done to me this many yeere.
So this young man as he in person grew,
So dayly did he in cunning and vertew.
Then after that he was seven yeere at laire,
Considering he was his fathers aire,
And had no man to brooke his heritage,
At seven yeeres end he send for him message,
Charging him sone for to come home fra hand,
Which he obey'd his fathers whole command:
And when he came to his fathers presence,
He hailed him with all good reuerence,

The seven Sages.

As him effeær'd with great humilitie,
His mother als in semblable degreæ,
Whereof they had both game, glæ and blithnes,
That their one sonne was commed to such grace,
For not alone in vertue he increst,
But als of bodie he was the likeliest:
Manly and stout well made at all fashion,
Well fauour'd of face, and good pproportion,
Gentle, humane, courteous, noble and fræ,
All man him lou'd for his humanitie.
So on a time it chanc'd vpon a day,
His Father and mother at table sate these thway,
The sonne seruing them both right courteously,
From the kitching the courses brought right comely.
In the meane time on a treæ lighted downe,
At the window, and sang with heauenly soun
A Nightingale, which sang with notes so cleare,
So wonder sweet, they all her notes did heare.
Eight dayes in one they would neuer thought long,
To heare that bird, so done sweet was her song,
Then said the Knight, well were he all his dayes,
That vnderstood what yon bird sings or sayes.
Then said the sonne, Father, with your honour,
So that it be to you no displeasure,
The birds song I shall declare to you,
But I am fear'd that ye take sturt therethow,
The Father said, sonne for my bennison,
What the bird sayes make interpretation,
Say on boldly, for no person take feare,
For I thereat shall no wise change my cheare,

Then

The seven Sages.

Then said the sonne, this is the very tale,
That ye father heares of the fightingale:
That I shall be such a man of great might,
And honour'de be with Lord, Baroun and Knight,
And shall come to, that ye my father free,
The water plate that ye shall hold to me,
And my mother befoze me she shall stand,
Beside her selfe, with towell in her hand,
Waiting while I wash mine hands in the plate,
This is the song that the bird sang of late.
The father said, thou false mislæred knaue,
Thou shalt of vs such seruice neuer haue,
Nor neuer shall come to such dignitie,
That we two shall make such seruice to thee.
So in malice, and als in great woodnes,
In great furie and vnnaturall kindnes,
He led his sonne, and kest him in the sea,
In displeasure, enuy and crueltie,
Saying, after in the sea he him flang,
Ly thou there still gesser of birds sang,
The Child could swimme, and so chanced to land,
Both whole and sound, helped by Gods hand,
And fasted there euen as the stozie sayes,
But meat or drinke by the space of foure dayes,
On the fift day by chance a ship came by,
Whereon sharply right loud the Childe can cry,
Skipper of ship for loue and charitie,
From this perill I pray you to saue me,
The Skipper heard, and beline dreyw to land,
And saw the Childe, in what state he could stand.

The seven Sages.

On him they had rueth and compassion,
Seeing hee was a likelie good person:
So narrowly by chance death hee eschewed,
All in one voice their hearts vpon him rewed:
And in on boord with speede did him receiue,
And in far lands to their countrie did haue:
Then to a Duke of that countrie him sold,
For a great summe of money to them told:
And as this boy grew daylie into age,
In like maner hee grew in personage,
Hooke and humane, in maners comfoztable,
Gentle, iocund, and to all game right able:
So with all men hee came in such fauour,
The Duke him lou'd, and tooke at him pleasure,
Into so far hee had the whole credence,
Of all his house, and the preheminance.
In that same time the King of that countrie,
All his great Lords, and counsell called hee,
His great Barons, his Knights and noble men,
That of his minde in some part they might ken.
Among the rest, euen did this Duke also,
To the counsell prepare himselfe to goe,
And with him tooke this Child in companie,
For his wisdome and his great courtesie,
So all these Lords hastened them with reuerence,
Before the King gaue due obedience,
They beeing all together so conuēnde,
To them in plaine hee did shew what hee meande,
Saying, my good Lords, and true Barons all,
You to my counsell for this cause did I call.

The

The seven Sages.

The matter is so great I haue to tell,
Therefore I would yee kepted all counsell,
If any man the trueth will mee declare,
I him promise my Daughter and mine Aire,
Into spousage, after mee to bee King,
When I am dead, for aye to brooke my reigne
This is the trueth and matter moueth mee,
About this place resorts Hauens thre,
And followes aye where euer I goe or lyes,
Kouping in one, and daylie on mee cryes,
Whiles mee behind, and whiles they come befoze,
With suchlike lookes as they would mee deuoure,
They leaue mee not, but ay continuallie,
They roup, they roare, and euer shoutes on mee,
Scaiping on eird, and wauing with their wings,
Dabbing their nebs, and at the windowes dings:
Therefore I send if any of you did know
The cause heereof that yee would to mee show,
His good reward hee shall not need to craue,
As I haue said, the same thing hee shall haue:
So hee deuoide the Hauens from mee all claene,
And in my sight no more that they bee seene,
When this was moued to all the counsell there,
There was no man the question could declare,
Then said this Childe, to his Master the Duke,
The man on hand that yon same question tooke,
For to declare would hee get his promise,
From the Kings Grace: yea quoth the Duke I will
Then said the Childe, if it pleased your Grace,
To shew the King, I shall declare the case.

And

The seven Sages.

Under the paine to put mine head in pledge:

As hee hes said, for to fulfill the wage.

When the Duke heard this tale, hee was right glad,

Incontinent past to the King and said,

And please your Grace there is an young mā here.

A cunning Clerke in clergie right perqueir,

Wise and wittie, and of ingine right hie,

Which promiseteth that hee shall satisfie,

All your desires, and the samine fulfill,

Touching the Ravens, so that it bee your will,

For to compleat the thing that yee haue said,

Faith (quoth the King) thereof I would bee glad,

Then brought the Duke the Childe into presence,

Before the King with all good reuerence,

Then said the King, Young man can yee declare,

The question that I proponed aire,

Before my Lords touching the Ravens thzee?

Then said the Childe, that shall I doe plainlie,

So that your Grace your promise will fulfill,

Then said the King but doubt truely I will.

Who euer will this question mee declare,

Hee shall marie my Daughter and mine Aire.

Then said the Childe this is the cause and why,

That thir thzee Ravens doe daylie on you cry.

There was two Ravens, an female and an male,

That had clecked the thir without fail.

Where they clecked into that each countrie,

Was great hunger, derth and penurie,

For fault of food women and men deceast,

In like maner so did both foull and beast,

The seven Sages.

Then this young Kauen, being intill her nest,
The mother flew ouer fields where she thought best
Seeking her food, in land out ouer all where,
And of her bird she toke no sturt nor care,
Then the male Kauen seeing that displeasure,
Upon her selfe she tooke daylie labour.
With paine and pyne and great penurie,
Fed this young Kauen, while it had strength to flee
And send her selfe out ouer the fields faire,
So of mother it toke no sturt nor care.
Now is past by the skant time of the yere,
Meate grew at large, and victuals was not deere.
Men beast and fowle, had meat abundantlie,
The female Kauen came home then hastelie,
And would haue had such friendship and kindnes,
To the young Kauen, as she which in distress,
Fed him with food while hee could send him sell,
The female Kauen thereof toke no trauell,
When the male Kauen toke well into his thought,
How she his bird had nureist and vpbrought,
In time of dearth, penurie and skant,
He thought no way his bird that hee would want,
For the female out ouer the fields flew,
And left her bird but helpe or yet reskew,
Still in the nest which therefore could not flee,
But there on force for to ly still and die,
Therefore the male though hee had more kindnes
To the young Kauen that in need and distress.
Out of perrell it nourished and vpbrought,
For the female, that flew and fed it nought.
Therefore the male, says that hee should posside,

The seven Sages.

his owne young bird, that helped it in neid,
rather then she which in necessitie,
left it alone, but help in point to die.
Then the female alledges this againe,
That in the birth of her bird had more paine:
More labour, sorrow, and penuritie,
More hunger then the male had by such thre,
Therefore of him she aught to haue more mirth,
That had of him such sorrow in her birth.
For this each cause my Souerane Lord the King,
Thir Rauens cryes and for none vther thing,
Desyryng you to iudge by your wisdom,
Who this young bird shall bryke in time to come.
Therefore will ye on this thing giue sentence,
They will no more cum in your grace presence.
Then said the King because that the female,
left her owne bird into such neid and bale,
And in no sort would nureis it nor feed,
But from it fled when that it had most neid,
I thinke alwayes with reason it should stand,
The bird should be at bidding and command,
With the male Rauen, and in his companie,
Because he fed it in necessitie.
And where that she alledges her againe,
To haue more sturt, sorrow, trauell and pane,
In his clecking, forth brynging and his birth,
I say to you all that was turned in mirth,
So soone as she her owne bird quick could see,
She quyte forgot her great aduersitie,
And als the male is cause of production,

The seven Sages.

And instrument of all generatioun,
I say also in time of her great need,
He did his bird with paine nourish and feed:
When the female it left into the nest,
With great hunger and als with cold opprest.
Therefore I giue definitiue sentence,
That the male rauen shall ay haue still presence,
The fellowship and als the companie
Of the young bird, whereuer he goe or flee,
And the female his fellowship shall want it,
Except the male vnto the female grant it.
Then when the rauens heard the King so declare,
Incontinent they flew vp in the air,
With such an noyse as it had thunder bene,
And was no more into that region scene.
This being done in short time after then,
Incontinent the King called this young man,
And said good freind your name to me ye shaw.
Alexander (quod he) they do me call.
Then said the king ye shall take none but me,
For your father and ye my sonne shall be.
For ye shall haue my daughter in spousage,
And after me shall brooke her heritage.
And euer still shall here be Lord and King,
And all this realme shall haue in gouerning.
Then Alexander in household still he baid,
Dayly seruice vnto the King he maid:
All men him loude for his great courtesie,
His gentilnes, and his humanitie:

The seven Sages.

He was so soft, so humble and mainfweil,
Courtesie, cunning, debonair, and descreit,
In all good games himselfe he did frequent,
In horse, harnesse, Justing and tozament:
And all good games gained for a gentleman
Dayly he used, and ay the praise he wan,
Aboue all them that dwelt into Egypt,
He farre excelled and had the masterhip.
In all that realme neither by farre nor neir,
In manly acts there was non found his peir,
Nor yet there was no great obscure questioun,
But he thereto wold giue solutioun,
So he guided in all thing and well proued,
With old and young wonder well was he loued.

¶ In this meane time Titus the Emperour,
Which was a man of might and great honour,
Of gentlenes and also courtesie,
In all vertue he was an A per se.
ouer all the world so farre rang his renowne,
That he precelled all other that bure Crowne,
Into so farre that ouer all where did flæ,
His noble name of liberalitie.
And round about into all parts him by,
Both farre and neir openly gart he cry,
If any man in maners and wisdomes,
And gude ingine vnto his court wold cum,
Should be intreated into their owne degree,
And rewarded after their facultie.

When Alexander heard tell of such an thing,
He pass fra hand to his father the King,

The seven Sages.

And said to him kneilling vpon his knée,
And pleis your grace my noble father fræ:
The noble Court and courtesie is knowne,
Of the Emperour, and to your grace is shownē,
That euery man delyts there to abyde,
That hes knowledge either to gang oꝛ ride,
Learning shall learne maners and manlines,
Practik of wars, gude gyding and proues,
Dewintreating with honour laud and gloze,
And great rewarde he shall obtaine therfore.
If please your grace I wold desire heartly,
Into that court and companie to be,
That I may wit and vertue dayly leir,
My selfe exerce in noble actes of weir.
This of your grace right humblie I desire,
No wayes meaning that of your grace I tyre,
For Godwilling I shall retorne againe,
To your pleasour which is my soueraine.
Then said the King your talking pleaseſth me,
But laith were I to want your companie.
Yet not the les, cause ye such thing desire,
I will glaidlie grant it that ye requyre.
But oꝛ ye pas see that ye furneist be,
In all behalſes, Gold, clothes, horſe and money.
That ye want nocht that is neidfull to haue,
That ye therethroȝw may both our honours ſaue,
Suchlike I thinke it were expedient,
That ye ſhould ſpouſe my daughter oꝛ ye went,
Oꝛ ye retorne perchance an bairne ſoȝth bring,
Then wiſt this realme either of Quēne oꝛ King.

Alex.

The seven Sages.

Alexander then said vnto the King,
If please your Grace to spare me of that thing,
While I returne then shall I with honour,
Your Daughter spouse with your Graces pleasure,
Then said the King of that I am content,
Euen as yee will I doe thereto consent.
And grant you heere with all beneuolence,
To passe your time where that yee pleis licence,
Then Alexander at the King tooke goodnight:
And all the Lords both Barons. Squyrs & Knights,
And last of all hee past to the Ladie,
Tooke his good-night and gaue her kisses thre,
Bade her bee blith for long hee thought not byde,
Shee said, Good sir, I pray God bee your gyde,
So forth hee faires a likelie man to loke,
And lap on Horse and on his voyage tooke.
And with him went an honest companie,
With gold and silver furneiss with all plentie:
Vnto the court where that the Emperour was,
Hee takes journey and so forward can pas,
And when hee came vnto the Emperour,
Upon his knees hee hailed him with honour,
Great reuerence and all humilitie.
But so soone as the Emperour could him see,
Where that hee sat out of his sate hee rose,
To Alexander but moze farie hee goes.
And kissed him, as was of court the gyse,
And in his Armes hee him embraced thryse.
And him inquired what was his name fra hand.
Wherefra hee came, which was his natie land.

The leuen Sages.

Suchlike hee speired whereof that hee was come,
Well on hee said, the trueth of all and some,
Hee said, And please your noble Majestie,
Alexander men vseth to call mee,
The King of Egypts sonne and heir I am,
I wot his Grace will ratifie the same,
And is come here vnto your Majestie,
To doe seruice if yee will except mee.
Yee are welcome the Emperour said then,
Yee seeme to bee a Noble Gentleman,
To his Stewart then a command hee gaue:
That in household Alexander hee should receiue,
The Stewart then to a Chamber him led,
And shew him then where he should haue his bed,
Well perfurge it into all necessaries,
With pertinents thereto in all effaires.
Alexander behaued him so wiselie,
With all the Court and each man loue wan hee,
So in short time for his well behauing.
Master Caruer hee was made to the King,
Not long after the Kings sonne in France,
To doe seruice and daylie obseruance,
In like maner come to the Emperour,
Whom hee receiued with blithnesse and honour
And speared such like at him what was his name,
Hee said, Lodowick all men callde mee at home,
And am come heir to doe your Grace seruice,
If that yee please vouchsafe to mee office.
The Emperour said Alexander truelie,
Is my Caruour, my Copper yee shall bee.

The feuen Sages.

For that office I thinke yee bee most able,
To doe seruice daylie befoze my table.
So committed hee to the Stewart Lodowick,
To doe to him as to Alexander suchlike.
So the Stewart to Lodowick did assigne,
That same Chalmer was Alexanders Lodging,
Whereof they were both verie well appeased,
That they were two into on Chalmer eased,
Thir two young men Alexander and Lodowick,
In alkin sozt they were so wonder like,
In face, fauour, in foyme and in fassion,
In stature, visage, speach and condition,
That each man said, one was the others brother,
Scarcelie could any knowe the one by the other,
But Alexander in deeds was moze actiue,
Then was Lodowick and far moze scientiue,
For Lodowick was shamefull and feminine,
And Alexander peart, furthie and masculine,
Of moze courage moze manly to behold,
Then Lodowick was some said be the third fold.
The Emperour which Titus heght to name,
Had a Daughter of fassoun faire and fame,
Heght Florentyne a'gratious Ladie,
Which nearest heare to her father should bee,
Whom her father loued aboue measure,
To her hee gaue aboundance of treasure,
Her own seruands shee had with her to dwell,
And keepe Court and household by her sell.
To whom daylie the Emperour vled to send
Of his dainties, his Daughters meis to mend.

An

The seven Sages. 3

In signe of loue daylie a dish or tway,
And Alexander to her bore them away,
To this Ladie before her them presented.
So in her sight each day hee was frequented,
Wherethrough fauour of this Ladie hee wan,
For his wisdom above all other man,
Thow busines it chanced on a day,
At dinner time Alexander was away
From his seruice, and none in his absence,
His fault supplied, nor yet gaue attendence.
Then Lodowick came and that persaued sone,
Did such seruice as Alexander should haue done,
And serued for him into the samin stead,
His fault hee did supplie and als remed,
And the dinner being neer hand at end,
The Emperour tooke vp a Dish and send,
To his Daughter as hee was wont to doe,
And bade Lodowick the same dish beare her to
Belæuing well Alexander it had bene,
Few could discerne their two visages betwene,
Then went Lodowick his way to the Ladie.
Presented her the dish vpon his knee,
With reuerence as hee in heart best thought,
For hee before that time had seene her nought,
Incontinent when hee the meat her brought,
Shee perceiued that Alexander it was nought.
Quod shee, Good sir. to mee yee shew your name,
Hee said, Lodowick it is surely Madame.
Whose sonne are yee? tell mee but circumstance,
My father is (quod hee) the King of France,

Quod

The ſeuē Sages.

Quod the good ſir I thanke you of your paine,
Ye are welcum to paſſe or yet remaine.

Thanke my father of the meate he hes ſend.

Quod he I ſhall and ſo ſoozth can he wend.

And tooke his leaue with all good reuerence,

So paſt againe to the Emperours preſence.

In this meane tyme Alexander come to table,

Did his ſeruice as he was wont and able.

The dinner done, Lodowick to chalmer paſt,

Right ſeik at heart, and laid him down bedfaſt,

Which Alexander perſaued incontinent,

Euen to Chalmer to Lodowick is he went,

And ſaid to him, O my good companioun,

What is the cauſe that ye are now lyene down?

Then ſaid Lodowick, I feill my ſelfe truelie

Next at the heart with ſoze infirmitie.

Greatly I feir without I get remeade,

It halds me ſo that it ſhall be my dead.

Alexander ſaid, the trueth I traist to ges,

The principall cauſe of all your ſoze ſeiknes.

For this ſame day when that the meate ye baite,

To yon Lady which that ye thought ſo faire:

Ye her beheld ſo verie feruentlie,

Her gude maners, her viſage and bewtie:

That ye therewith is hanked in her loue,

From her your heart no way ye can remoue.

Then ſaid Lodowick, O my brother deare,

The very trueth but dout ye haue gone neare.

All phiſitians in world they could not ges,

For iudge moze true the cauſe of my ſeiknes.

Whereof

The seven Sages.

Whereof but doubt I take an felloun feir,
Get I no helpe that it shall doe me deir,
Then Alexander bade him be of comfort,
With my power I shall your paine support,
Lift vp your heart and be of good courage,
Sturt in no way your seiknes can asswage.
Then Alexander bethought him of an cast,
Incontinent to the mercat he past,
An pretious cloth with his owne gold he bocht
Whereof Lodowick knew no way nor wist nocht,
Braue set about with pretious stones coastleie,
And it presented vnto the fair Ladie,
When she it saw she asked him in hy,
Where he could get such coastleie cloath to by.
Quod he, the Son of the most Christian king,
Yes for your loue madame send you this thing,
But for a sight that he saw of your face,
He is linked so fast in loues lace.
That he lyeth seik without he get remead,
Appearandly there is nothing but dead.
And for your loue suffer ye him to die,
It shall degraid your honour greatumlie.
Alexander she said would ye now counsell me,
That I should loise my cleane virginitee,
Considering I am of blood royall,
Descended of the stock imperiall,
And secondly as ye know well in deid
By appearance to this croun should succed
If I did so as ye to me declare,
Then were I tynt but doubt for evermaire,

The seven Sages.

Beléue ye well, that Ie for such message,
Shall haue no thanke, nor win of me no wage;
Wherefoze passe ye from hand out of my sight,
Your message is neither reasoun nor right.
He saw the Mayde was sumthing discontent,
Furth of her sight he past incontinent:
On the nixt day past Alexander againe,
To the mercat and played the counterpayne,
To this Ladie he bought an fyne head geare,
Aboue moze the cloth it was threë times as deare,
And it presented vnto the Ladie gent,
On Lodowicks name therewith vnto her went,
When the Ladie this costely gift had sene,
She merueiled great what Alexander did meane,
And said to him I maruell of a thing,
That ye to me such costely gifts should bzing,
From any man but if it were your sell,
Deferrand ay your owne errand to tell.
And so oft tymes ye haue had my presence,
And for to speik ye might haue had licence,
Such thing I sæ in your heid neuer sank,
Wherefoze but doubt I can you the les thank.
Quod he, madame ye must hold me excused,
I durst not speake perchance ye had refused,
And moze at ouer my birth it is so low,
So heich matters I durst not to you show.
Quod she it is an prouerbe of the old,
Which I oft tymes in merrines hes heard told.
Let a young man whether he speid or nocht,
Gaine not his speach but speak forth and spare nocht
Into

The seven Sages.

Into mine heart (quod he) such was not grounded,
For with such thing my hart was neuer wounded,
And if such thing perchance had happened me,
I wold haue charged one of more low degre,
For is your grace, but my good freind Lodowick
Is the great heire of the most chiefe Kingrick,
Of all the world and the most Chyistian king,
The more bolder he durst desire such thing,
Rather noz I which may be no compare,
Unto your grace for your blood singulare.
Quod she this word in remembrance ye take,
Loue whom ye like, they say loue hes no lack.
Quod he who hes into his companie,
An good fellow as Lodowick now hes me,
And in him trusteth: am I not bound againe,
To wis him good where that he lyeth in paine,
With my power in so far as I may,
Doubtles Madame I could not say him nay.
Therefore I thinke ye Ladie traist and trew,
Wold ye vouchsafe on Lodowick to rew,
On him to haue compassion and pitie,
That is so soze wounded in your belotie:
An word of yours wold make him haill againe,
Him to relieue of all seiknes and paine.
Let not his dead be no wyse on you laid,
For that thing shall your honour great degraid.
If ye absent from him your gude kindnes,
Each man will say that ye are merciles.
She said good sir, forsooth ye ierne great crynie,
Of me ye get no answer at this tyme.

Therefore

The seven Sages.

Therefore passe on your wayes, farewell adieu,
You are to blame so sharplie to persew
For any man, but if it were your sell,
Passe on your way as now no more I tell.
Hee tooke his leaue and departed anone,
The mozne againe to the mercat is gone
And bought a Belt which ten times was more deir,
For was the cloth and als the gay headgeir.
Presenting it vnto the Ladies sight,
On Lodowicks name the wofull wounded wight,
When shee persaued the gifts so costlie was,
Vnto her selfe shee kest and did compasse,
Such diuerse thinges as needs not to bee shewne,
Nor to each man in no kind to bee knowne,
Therefore as now I thinke best let them bee,
Each man should not know Ladies priuitie,
But at the Last to Alexander shee said,
Wot not well to bee moued or glaide,
At your message, but wonder loath were mee,
In my default that any man should die,
Mans life to lose for lacke of loue,
So I did, I were great to reprove,
Therefore yee shall haue in this poynt credence,
In my chalmer I will gine him presence.
At the thirde houre that past is ouer mid-night,
By Chalmer dooze hee shall find open right.
Shew yee him so this is my minde and will,
Your minde (quod hee) Madams I shall fulfill.
Of the answere Alexander was glad,
Went to the Chalmer and to his fellow said,

Lodo-

The seven Sages.

Lodowick ly not, yee tarke ouer long for loue,
I haue not hained to hant for your behoue.
The companie of yon faire Ladie gent:
Howbeit some time shee stoo not all content:
Yet not the lesse some grace I haue obtained,
To your intent, so farre to her I meaned.
Her great fauour to you I haue purchast,
And I beleue all is come for the best,
Wherefore bee blith and take you good comfort,
With cleane courage now get you vp at short.
And in secret I will you shew a thing,
To her chalmer this night I shall you bzing.
Where that yee shall right wonder welcome bee,
And well intreated with that faire gay Ladie.
When hee that heard hee was couragious,
With haile and feir, iocund and als joyous,
Als blith in heart and sturt away was worne,
As euer hee was from first day hee was bozne.
Was neuer bryde so blith of her brydegrome,
Was neuer bird so blith to light on blome:
Pre yet sparhawk so blith to get her Prey,
Nor yet the Lark in fresh mornings of May,
Neuer Menstrall so blith of his reward,
As was Lodowick when hee thir tithings heard,
But for to speake of perfyte Potingars,
Fyne Physicions, maruellous Medicinars,
Clarkes of cunning, and counsellours of hale,
Charmers of chafte and giuers of Libleale,
I read neuer into no booke nor place,
As Alexander was to Lodowick in this cace,

The seven Sages.

For look how sone that Lodowick heard him speak
He said himselfe hee was no longer sicke.
Hee know leiches will haue a long proces,
Good entreating, rewards and als kindnes,
Bankets making where euer it may be sought,
With Alexander be no way so was nought.
Alexander debursed his money ay,
Not being knowne to Lodowick in no way,
Wherethro to him hee conquest this Ladie,
By costly gifts cost with his owne money.
Now let vs shew how Lodowick by hee rose,
With curious corpes and cleikit on his cloths,
Then Alexander his minde vnto him shew,
How the Ladie all his maladie knew,
And how shee was of his comming content,
And how that hee did purchase her consent,
Alexander conuoyed Lodowick that night,
To the Chamber of that faire Ladie bright.
With whom hee was in joy and merlines,
And from hence forth euer kept kindnes,
In such a sort where that one was content,
Without contrare the other gaue consent,
So still they vsed in others company,
Belœuing well all was done quietly.
Yet not the lesse it come vnto the eares
Of all the Court among Knights and Squyers,
How that Lodowick so stood in great kindnesse,
With that Ladie wrought so in quietnesse,
So among them they did conspire his dead,
Not regarding the Ladies fauour nor fead.

The seven Sages.

So Alexander thereof got knowledging,
Hæ Armed his corse for to gainstand that thing,
And when they knew that Alexander toke parte,
Him to pursue from thence forth they lost heart,
Unto so far, from all such they did cease,
And suffered well Lodowick to goe in peace.
Howbeit oft times into great jeopardie,
For Lodowicks cause Alexander was truely,
But to Lodowick such was not knowne a deale,
But the Ladie it knew wondrous well.
Then in short time there was a message send,
Out of Egypt, by writing making kend,
That of the lat was new deceast their King,
Which aboue them many a yeere did ring.
Requiring home Alexander to come.
And with honour receiue his owne Kingdome,
For his Ladie the Kings Daughter and Aire
Of his absence toke both great feare and care.
Because the Realme was desolate of an head,
Unto that houre since her ffather was dead,
Which some hee shew the Ladie Florentine,
Next thereafter to Lodowick shew it syne,
That hee in haste behoned to depart,
Whereof they were both wonder sad in heart,
In haste hee past vnto the Emperour,
Saying please your Graces high honour,
Forth of Egypt I haue receiued writing,
Making it knowne my ffather's departing.
So it behoueth mee to passe and receiue,
The crowne thereof by right thereto I haue;

The seven Sages.

If that your grace will licence me to passe.
Without your fanour I will no licence aske,
Without your leaue o; I should licence take,
I had rather both crowne and realme forsake,
In these effaires what euer it please your grace
Of very truethe so standeth euen the case.
The Emperour said ye shall know verelie,
Of your departing my heart is right heauie,
For I held you among my seruants all,
Into my house euer the principall,
But it becommeth not to an Emperour,
Into no sort, nor yet is his honour,
To his seruants to make impediment,
What time they be promoted to any rent.
But farre rather to help them and supplie,
To greater gifts and higher dignitie.
Therefore go ye from my Stewart receaue,
As much gold as ye please for to haue,
With my blessing and with my inward heart,
In Gods name I free you to depart,
And bade farewell, and so he tooke goodnight,
At the Emperour, then at Lord Squyre and knight,
Who was sozie of his short departing,
For he was loued both with old and young.
Then past Lo lowick, and with him Florentyne,
And on homeward conuoyt him myles nyne.
Alexander wold let them no further go,
But for to see the dolour and the wo.
When they departed whereto should I say moze?
It wold haue maid a whole mans heart right soze,

The feuen Sages.

Foꝛ very woe all thre to ground fell downe,
Good Florentine foꝛ woe she fell in swoone.
Alexander then tooke her vp againe,
Comforted her of her dolour and paine,
And right so did to his fellow Lodowick,
Comforted him with many words suchlike,
Then said to him, My good fellow and brother,
Whom I loue best of men aboue all other,
In time to come foꝛ to keepe you from skaith,
This I you say, and to my Lady baith,
Tuitching secrets that is betwixt vs two,
Keepe them quiet, oꝛ ye will suffer wo,
Wherefoꝛe take heede and looke right well about,
Doe ye not so, ye stand in right great doubt,
Foꝛ well I wote, an other in my stead,
Shall come but doubt and haue you at such feid,
With great hatred, deceit and als enuy,
Both day and night shall you check and espy,
To see if they can challenge you with cryme,
Wherefoꝛe beware and take good heede in tyme,
Foꝛ if they can challenge you any way,
Oꝛ you rebuke surely they will assay,
With the Emperour in fauour ye do stand,
Whairfoꝛe the moze they will cast at your hand.
Then said Lodowick in so farre as I may,
I shall beware both by night and by day,
But wo alace therein what shall I do,
When I haue none that I dare lippen to?
That I should want your faithfull companie,
I can not mend therefoꝛe full wo is me.

The feuen Sages.

Set I heartly requyre you of one thing,
He will resauē from me this litle ring,
Betwixt vs two to be a remembrance,
Of two Princes of Egypt and of France.
Alexander said the ring I will receaue,
An remembrance of you still for to haue,
But yet howbeit the ring I had not tane,
Your remembrance from me no wise had gane,
So one another about the neck imbzaist,
With great kynones and then about the waist,
But Florentyne was so confounded in spirit,
She could doe nocht but sat her down to greit.
Alexander said amends now no greiting,
But I pray God grant vs a merrie meiting,
And so partit with hearts wonder wo,
Into their home each on their gait did go.

Not long after the Kings Sonne of Spaine,
Came to the Court in seruice to remaine,
Named Guydo and got that same office,
That Alexander had into seruice,
Also the Stewart to him he did assigne,
That samine house, the Chalmier and Ludging,
That Alexander and Lodowick dwelt intill
Which was but doubt all against Lodowicks will,
Howbeit the same no wise he could mend it,
But yet therewith his heart was sore offendit,
Lodowick to Guydo could keip no fellowship,
As he did to Alexander of Egypt,
Whairfoze Guido against him tooke enuy,
Howbeit they both in on Chalmer could ly,

The seven Sages.

And Lodowick had of Guydo such feare,
That he durst nought to the Lady go neate,
In aventure that Guydo should espy,
Of his secreits and them in open cry.
Yet not the lesse of her he had such thought,
Her companie to abstaine could he nought.
For she could not his companie well want,
So he againe somtimes to her did hant.
Then Guydo that persauing was not sleuth,
On them to wait while that he knew the trueth,
That Lodowick had with Lady Florentyne,
So great kyndnes, that he thought after syne.
Considering well the trueth that he did know,
Sum tyme vnto the Emperour he should show.
So in his mynde he held it quietlie,
With false dissait while he his tyme might see.
Upon a tyme the Emperour in his hall,
Talking about among his nobles all,
Praising greatly the wit and the gentlenes,
Of Alexander the wisdom and kyndnes,
He said he was both verteous true and wyse,
To gyde a house right well he could deuise,
Then said Guydo and please your Maiestie.
So farre praised he ought not for to be,
For for to be commended as ye wene,
An great tratour in your house hes he bene.
The Emperour said tell on how that can be,
Then said Guydo I shall you tell truelie.
To your Daughter ye haue an Lady faire,
The which shou'd be appearantly your air.

The seven Sages.

And by the helpe the falsset and supplie.
Of him Lodowick hes done her villanie,
Euen so nightly when Lodowick takes delite,
Hee hes his will of that faire Ladie white,
And all this came by the false sittell sight,
Of Alexander that hee wrought day and night.
When the Emperour this tale heard to him told,
In his minde hee was mooued manifold,
In that same time Lodowick came thzow the Hall,
And vpon him the Emperour soone did call,
Saying, What's this that I heare tell of thee,
If it bee true, thou shalt bee hanged hee,
Then said Lodowick, And please your noble grace,
We will mee shovw thereof how stands the case,
Then said Guydo in open Audience,
Here I ahow in your Graces presence,
That Lodowick lyes with Ladie Florentyne,
So sure as standes on craige this head of mine,
And so hee hes defiled the blood Royall,
Which I shall prooue on him in plaine battell,
On his body and thereat shall I stand,
Defend it now if thou dare take on hand.
Then said Lodowick pleaseeth your Majestie,
I am saklesse of yon hee sayes on mee,
And right falslie hee layeth on mee such cryme,
Which I shall prooue when euer hee thinks time
So into God I true to finde remead,
All this falsset shall light on his owne head:
Then kest Guydo his gloue downe for a traine,
Lodowick lowted and toke it vp againe,

The seven Sages.

Saying I will that Ladies fame defend,
With heart and hand vnto my liues end.
The Emperour then to them both did assigne,
An certaine day of battell and feghting,
And to them both hee bade silence and rest.
Then bade them passe where that they pleased best.
Then past Lodowick to the Ladie fra hand,
And all the cace hee gart her vnderstand:
And how hee was accused into p[re]sence:
Of her father in open Audience,
And how that hee assigned the fighting day,
And vnto her on this maner can say,
Now Florentine my Ladie faire and gent,
At mee behoues to worke with auisement
Of you alwayes: for so the matter stands,
I cannot chaip vndeade of Guydoes hands,
For why? if I had denyed to him battell:
Then had I yeeld my selfe as criminall,
And of the cryme granted my selfe guiltie,
Wherefore force was to counterfit nisie.
Suchlike Guydo is wonder stout and strong,
In fait of Armes hee he's beene vsed long,
I neuer knew in no companie here,
But Alexander to fight might bee his peere,
For I am weake and feeble of persoun,
And to his strength hes no comparisoun,
If I him meet in field what shall bee then?
Without refuge I am but a deid man,
And so on mee shall ly the cause and blame,
Then yee for ever shall thole sclander and shame.

Then

The seuen Sages.

Then Florentine to Lodowick this can say,
Since such a chance is come betwixt vs tway.
And I feill you despaired in one part,
And in this case ouer weake spreited in heart:
Yet neuerthelesse where two illes does approach,
I thinke it best from the greatest to foatch,
The first ill is, if yee you guiltie grant,
Then shall I ay both wealth and worship want,
And yee also bee put to cruell dead,
And I for ay my life in langour leade:
The second is if yee to battell boun,
Yee are so weake and feeble of persoun,
And Guydo is so stronge and als hardie,
That ye dow not gainstand him straikes thre,
And so alwayes I can find no remead,
How euer it goe there is to you but dead,
Wherefore heerein yee shall my counsell doe,
Yee shall but let my father soone passe to,
And shew to him on your most humble wise,
That your father vpon his death bed lyes,
Whereof there is new writings come you till,
Desiring him if that it bee his will,
To pzogogate the day of battell set,
That yee may goe and come againe bnt let,
In the meane time with your father to speake,
Be the reason hee lyes so wonder seeke,
That yee may ken his perfit latter will,
So that yee may in all points it fulfill,
And for to speike with him two words or thre,
Forth of this world or hee depart and die,

And

The seven Sages.

And that yee may his blissing obtaine,
With his owne mouth then yee to louk his eene,
So when yee haue obtained his licence,
To Alexander in all good haste passe hence
Then secretlie to him the matter show,
How things stands persitely let him know,
And him require into this extreamc case,
That hee would come and to supplie your place,
Contrare Guydo and with him for to feght,
Because your selfe to doe the same haue heght.
This counsell then it pleased Lodowick well.
Euen as the said so did hee euerie dell.
Licence obtained, and als prolonged the day,
To Alexander Lodowick toke his journey,
Small rest hee toke, but rade both day and night,
Till Egypt land while hee came vnto right,
To the Castell then came hee on in hy,
Where that the King good Alexander did ly,
When the King got of Lodowick knowledging,
Hee marueiled great the cause of his comming.
Incontinent to meet him is hee gone,
As his brother euen so with him hes tane,
With all honour hee did him there receiue,
As him become or hee liked to haue.
Then said Lodowick my deare brother and friend,
An time bygone and euer yet hes beene,
Now at this time I let you vnderstand,
My life and death lyeth both into your hand.
Hee said Brother make knowne to me your querrell
Your life shall be God willing in no perrell:

Then

The seven Sages.

Then said Lodowick, ye remember ye shew,
At our parting sum words which I find trew
Saying I should in fellowship on haue,
Into your stead perchance would me deceaue;
And ly in wait my secrets to espy,
Which now indeed right wonder well find I:
He said without I were moze circumspect,
In which my selfe in sum part did neglect.
For one Guydo the Kings sonne of Spaine,
Into your steade with me he did remaine.
And by reasoun he my secrets not knew,
To my Lady I durst not long persw.
And so at length I could not long abstene,
It chanced him know the secrets vs betwene,
Then me accused befoze the Emperour,
Which vnto me was vtter displeasour.
And hes promised in battell to make good,
That I defyled the hie imperiall blood,
So hand for hand in battell we must feght,
To counter him by my hand I haue heght,
This day eight dayes the battell should be done,
Quod Alexander, sozsoth that is ouer sone.
Moze quod Lodowick, Guydo is stout and strong,
He hes bene vled in actes of warres long.
But I am weake and febill as ye kend,
From his great dints I can not me defend.
My Florentyne therfore gaue me counsell,
You for to shew the cause and maitter haill.
For she beloues you ay her faithfull friend,
For to this tyme ye haue so euer bene.

She

The seven Sages.

She trusts doubtles ye will keepe and supplie,
Both me and her in this necessitie.
Then Alexander to Lodowick can say,
As there any knowes ye came heere away:
Bot Florentyne? (quod he forsooth) not one,
For each man trowes to France that I am gone,
For to visite my Father lying sick,
Whir same words to the Emperour I did speake.
To that effect he did prolong the day,
And I at poist to you am come away.
Quod he shew forth what Florentyne bad desire,
O what's the thing at me she did require,
O what counsell gaue Florentyne to you,
What I should helpe in what maner and how.
Then Lodowick said, O my most constant friend,
Thus stands the cace, euen this did she mein,
Considering we two be so wonder like,
That ye should come with Guydo battell strike.
And none knowing but Florentyne allane,
The battell done, ye to come home againe,
And I siklyke in court to present me,
As I had done the act and ieopardie.
Alexander said the battell ye haue set,
This day eight dayes to fight withoutten let.
It is ouer short: for euen thus stands the cace,
I can not well be readie in such space:
For tarie I the mozne withoutten moze,
I can not see that I can well be there:
Wherefoze but doubt what shall I say hereto,
I can not tell noz wote not how to doe.

And

The seven Sages.

And my subiects I haue commanded haill,
That they be here the morne at my bydail,
Keepe I iourney, thogh I ride at the post,
Of my wedding the day is tint and lost,
If I go not, and so keepe the battell,
Then Florentyne and ye are lost but fail.
Wherefoze Lodowick, what thinke ye best to doe?
What ye deuise here I apply thereto.

Lodowick hearing such excuse reasonable,
To fall in swoun where that he stood was abill,
Began to sigh and sorow manifold,
For to his heart catched was caires cold:
Saying all woe and grief to me betydes,
Sorow and cair now commeth on euery sydes,
Persauing that Alexander to him said,
Let be such sturt, take comfort and be glaid:
For I will not forsake you this voyage,
Thogh I should both tyne wyfe and heritage,
But ye shall heare in thought what I haue tane,
Into so farre as we two are lyke one,
And as ye ken it is not long ago,
The Emperours Court hither since I came fro:
Yet am I not weill knowne in this countrie,
Many of my Lords as yet haue not seene me,
And for that cause they ken not my ptesence,
They will take you for me in mine absence.
Wherefoze heere shall ye tary and abyde,
And in my steid ye shall mary my byde,
Then hold the feast with great solemnitie,
And gar all things be done that done should be.

How

The ſeuē Sages,

Howbeit my ſelfe in body be abſent,
Let nothing want moze then I were preſent,
To my renowne pertaineth oz honeſtie.
Do I for you, doe ye ſuchlike for me:
Except onlie when that ye paſſe to bed,
With my owne wyfe, howbeit that ye were wed,
Into my name and mine authoꝛitie,
Into that race ſee that ye faithfull be.
And ſo but baid I ſhall incontinent
Loup vpon hoꝛſe and to the battell went.
And ſet my coꝛſe for you into the field,
Then your actioun debait with ſpeir and ſhield,
And if that God grant me the victorie,
For to vanquiſh Guido your enemye:
Without tarie I ſhall returne againe,
And ye ſuchlike in Court for to remaine,
As ye had done the principall act your ſell,
So with honour in Court ſtill ſhall ye dwell.
This being done, Alexander toke goodnight,
Letting no wit vnto his Lady bright.
Vnto the court from hand toke his iournay,
No man knowing the mater but they tway.
So Lodowick baid at hame ſtill with the Quene,
Into Egypt as Alexander it had bene.
And on the morne Lodowick with noueltie,
Paſt to the Church with great Solemnitie,
Euen as it were Alexander the King,
And ſpouled his wiſe at the Church with an ring,
No man knowing but Alexander it had bene,
That had ſpouled with great honour the Quene.

Then

The seven Sages.

Then held the feast with mirth and meriues,
Great honour gloze, triumph, laud and blithnes,
All the great Lords, and nobles that were there,
They made great mirth and solace singulare.
Then when night come, all men bowed to rest,
To goe to bed the Bride shee thought it best.
But when Lodowick past to bed with the Quene,
A naked sword hee laid them two betwene,
Whereof shee had great maruell and wonder,
On the first night that they should ly a sunder.
So hee each night with the Quene did remaine,
Her bed fellow while the King come againe.
Nothing shee said, but yet mekill shee thought,
By the reason the trueth that shee knew nought.
Now let Lodowick and the Quene hyde at home,
And wee will speake of Alexanders fame.
Then came belyue the day of toznamen,
Alexander to the Emperour hee went,
Then said. O most redoubted Soueraine.
Unto your grace now I am come againe,
Left my father in great infirmitie,
Doubting nothing but shortly hee shall die.
For to debaite this battell with my blood.
With my two hands to make my querrell good,
For God willing to all it shall be kend,
How I justlie my querrell shall defend,
The Emperour said Yee doe all that yee can,
Conforme vnto a Noble Gentleman.
For beleue well if your querrell be right,
Yee shall triumph like a keene cruell knight,

The seven Sages.

Fortoun will fauour your quarrell and Action,
Howbeit yee fight contrare an Champion.
Then quietlie hee passed vnder cure,
To Florentyne the hie gate forward sure,
Of whose comming shee was right wonder glaid
Shee him imbzaist, they kist and after said,
Blest bee the time that yee are now come heere.
From all dolour to mirth hes changed my cheere.
Wee are als welcome to mee now your alone,
As any man on life, excepting on,
For ay with mee yee toke so trew an part,
Quod hee Ladie I thanke you with mine heart.
Where is Lodowick I pray you to mee show,
And how hee does I would yee let mee know.
Hee said Lodowick was into great blithnesse,
In mirth and joy and in great merines,
There is no man liues in more lustie life,
For hee hes now married an gay young Wife.
Maried (quod shee) I thinke that cannot bee,
It is for trueth forsooth Madame, said hee,
Euen on the morne after I tooke voyage.
It was assignit the day of mariage.
The banket was prepared right well I ken,
For called thereto was many noble man.
All thing was drest there was no more ado.
But on the morne the Church for to go to.
The Ladie said, What woman may that bee?
Hee said, Forsooth shee is an gay Ladie,
Lustie of loue right bounteous and faire,
Of that countrie shee is appearand Air.

Quod

The seven Sages.

Quod Florentine thort kindnes there hes beene,
Or else old loue that hes beene them betwene,
But if such thing that Lodowick now hes wrought
Your comming here I thinke it is for nought,
Her countenance to keepe bade fill the cop,
Howbeit I trow she list not drinke a drop,
Then Alexander perceiuing her patience,
Her lowlinesse and gentle countenance,
So longer hee would hold her into noy,
But turned her sturt incontinent to joy.
Quod hee, Ladie, bee blith and make good care,
All hee hes done, is done for your welfare:
We know right well is none in world more like,
In all fassouns, nor I am to Lodowick,
So when hee come, and told mee his errand,
Euen on the morne my brydail should haue stand
And be reason I could not keepe dyet,
Nor yet to bide the day of brydail set,
Because on him so strangely come the care,
Kindnesse caused mee to put him in my place,
So I caused him in my place for to passe,
So man knowing but the same man I was,
And wed my wife as I had beene my self,
And to take the chance of the battell,
For if that I while the brydail was done,
Had bidden at home, I had not come so soone,
To the first day of battell that was set,
Yet then I thought my brydail should not let,
So I him left in my Realme to be King,
While I returne and you to honour bring,

The seven Sages.

If hēe was blith it needes not for to talke,
Hēe toke his leaue, and to Chalmer did walke.
But Florentine there was none that could tell,
Of very trueth but it was Lodowicks sell.

¶ So on the morne the day of Battell was,
And Alexander vnto the field can pas,
Into such geir as then to him effeared,
And on his Steed so stoutly hēe him steared,
Then lighted downe like a keene cruell knight,
To the Emperour the hie way railed right,
Befoze Guydo thir words to him hēe said,
My great Soueraigne a cryme is on mee laid,
By this Guydo falsly befoze your face,
Hēe mee accused befoze your noble Grace,
Saying that I had carnall knowledging,
Of your Daughter, and her flesh defouling,
Which to your Grace it were great dishonour,
And I suchlike to you a great tratour,
But heere I sweir and als affirmes surely,
By the great G O D that bled his blood for mee,
By the Euangels that our Sauour spake,
And all the mights that God in woorld did make,
That I neuer in no manner of way,
Knew your Daughter, as Guydo did you say,
My minde was not to doe her dishonour,
Into no way to your Grace displeasour,
And I this day by helpe of Gods grace,
Upon Guydo shall preiue befoze his face,
That hēe hes lied, in despight of his heart,
And all his kin, and who will take his part.

The

The seven Sages.

Then said Guydo, yet I say once againe,
Before your grace, thou art a tratour plane,
And als I sweare by God omnipotent,
With thy owne flesh his daughter thou has spent,
To thy pleasure and thy soull appetyte,
By when thou list or therein had delyte,
Euer each night had her at thy pleasour,
Which was to her great shame and dishonour,
And als vnto the Emperours Maiestie,
Open treasoun. which I shall proue on thee.
Upon thy head in contrar all thy kin,
Cum and defend if thou wilt worshop win.
Then Heraulds cryed with loud voyce hie on hight,
Go together we pray God shew the right,
Incontinent they stended on their steades,
Like valiant men into their weirlyke weids,
As two bold beires together both they ran,
Each one was like to ding down horse and man,
Speirs sprang like sparks, as fyre doth off the flint,
There durst no man endure there doutsam dint,
When speirs was past. there shinand swords drew,
While plait and maill ail into flinders flew.
There swords they swang while their steids swat at
The gilté spurs the cheuals skin throw glyds. (syds,
froith ran fra fronts of the fierce forsie steids,
White Horse and man both at the Wasnet bleids.
otif straits they strike, of others stood none aw,
While Alexander at iast an vantage saw,
On Guydoes neck an naked place he spyres,
Where at good speid he strikes tynse or thyrse,

The seven Sages.

While at the last thereat he strake so lang,
All the harnesse was there away he dang.
Synce thereafter but any moze delay,
He put Guydo into an felloun fray.
Guydo that sies againe vpon him sets,
Off his gorget ane buckle or two he frets,
And strake his gorget down vpon his brest,
Alexander an other straik wailed neist,
Vpon his neck which he persaued was bair,
With all his strength an straik he laid on there,
While both there steids stakred on the stound,
And Guydoes head it happed on the ground.
Then lighted down and toke it in his hand,
To the Lady it sent into presand,
Whereof she was right wonder blyth and glaid
To her ffather the same she bure and said:
ffather behold the head which vpon me,
So falsly leid, such feid vnfaithfully,
Which me and you at his power defamed,
But the blameles himselfe hes made vnblamed,
The Emperour said the valiant victorie,
By Lodowick wrought is now showane patently,
Belæuing well that Lodowick it had beene.
Then said, Lodowick it may be heard and seene.
For ye haue saued this day from shame and skaith,
Your owne honour and als my Daughters baith,
And from thence forth the moze ay ye shall stand,
In my fauour I heght you by my hand,
And hereafter who euer doth you defame,
In that behalfe he shall incurre my blame,

And

The seven Sages.

And at mine hand shall be accused of cryme.
That such thing talketh of you at any time:
Then Alexander said to the Emperour,
The victorie is ay at Gods pleasour.
Who trusteth in him no way he will them wrack,
For there iust cause he will not throw aback.
But alwayes will defend the innocent,
And will not thole the saikles to be spent.
Since he hes send to me the victorie,
Thanks evermore to him allanerlie.
But now my most redoubted Lord and King,
Humbly your grace I requyre of an thing.
From my Father when I last did depart,
He was so vext with seiknes at his heart,
That we beleued nothing but sudden dead,
And now this case as ye know come on head.
That I might not at that time well remaine,
Now I wold haue licence to passe againe,
To vnderstand in what stait all things stands,
And thereafter to put rule in my lands.
And if he be of seiknes conualet,
While I returne I shall take litle rest.
The Emperour said your language liketh me well
But I would not so mot my soule haue sell,
Want your service, no: your dayly presence,
Yet not the les. I grant you good licence.
For such effaires as ye haue sholue to me,
To pas againe into your owne countrie:
Then toke he leaue, and bade each one good night,
To his owne Realme rade home the gate full right.

The seven Sages.

In this meane tyme Lodowick he thoght great long
To looke about to the wall heid did gang
And perceaued an horsleman cumming fast.
Then Alexander he knew weill at the last,
Whome when he saw he was both blyth and glaid,
Then heartfully receaued him and said,
O most true freind of all my freinds algyue,
Whose great kyndnes my wits can not descryue:
Ye are welcum, so far heere as I may,
How haue ye done and sped in your iourney,
O what an end haue ye brought it vnto,
Quod he Lodowick now haue ye les ado,
Nor of before: for Guydo is departed,
Wherefore he blyth and wonder merrie hearted.
I wote I sent his head to Florentyne,
To her Father she it presented syne,
Wherefore go ye vnto the Emperour,
For now ye stand far more in his fauour,
For euer ye did before at any time,
And als ye are maid cleane of all the cryme,
That Guido laid with your faire Ladie,
Touching your fame and your owne honestie,
Then said Lodowick it neids me say no more,
My Lyfe oft tymes ye haue preserved before,
And now my life and als my honestie,
Suchlike preserved the fame of an Ladie,
Which be no way I can not recompence,
But my heartie will and beneuolence
Then they embraist at others toke gudnicht,
And Lodowick raid vnto the Emperour right.

The seven Sages.

No man knowing Alexanders absence,
For all his Court beleened his owne presence,
Suchlike his Queene the matter nothing knew,
For no man was that such thing to her shew,
Then when night come Alexander him sped,
Without tarie vnto the Queenes bed,
Sone in his Armes hee hint her in all haste,
With faire sweete words right tenderlie embraist,
With all pleasure that thereto did pertaine,
Dz into bed a King doe to a Queene.
Quod shee, wherefore since first yee did mee wed,
And euery night I lay into your bed,
Yee neuer shewd loue nor kindnes to mee,
Nor no friendship while now how may this bee?
For I beleue yee had iudged some crime,
In my contraire which neuer in my time,
I committed vnto your noble Grace,
Whereof I am astonisht in this case,
Out of my minde it cannot well depart,
But still remaine at the rutes of mine heart.
Quod hee thereat why are yee discontent,
All that I did was done in good intent.
In good intent? (quod shee) there I say nay,
For euerie night yee laid betweene vs tway,
An naked sword and neuer couet more
Of my persoun, and knew no cause wherefore.
I did all that (said hee) for probatioun,
And als of loue a great confirmatioun.
Betwixt vs two of euerlasting loue,
On such a sozt I thought I would you proue.

The seven Sages.

In all my dayes yee shall not finde againe,
A naked sword in bed betwixt vs twaine.
Yet not the lesse the Queene said in her thought,
In all my dayes forget shall I it nought,
That loue thou throwes for to obtaine of mee,
In thy despite I shall it weake on thee.
Yet nought shee said, but thought it in her minde,
How shee might turne her loue to other kinde,
Where was a Knight whom shee loued of before,
And from hence forth shee loued him more & more.
At last they two bethought them of one thing,
How they might best slay and destroy the King,
Betwixt them two a conceat sone they fand.
Gave him poyson, and thought that hee fra hand,
Should bee but dead, and yet his complexion,
It was so strong, it toke no infection,
In his Intrals, but broke forth from his heart,
Into the flesh and shew the selfe outward.
So by working within a short proces,
It was conuerted in other soe sicknesse,
Incurable aye holdin among vs,
And turned into an leper Lazarus,
While that no man with patience might him see,
And all the Lords despised his companie,
Saying it is a thing right odious,
Ane loathsome leper for to ring ouer vs,
For all his Children and his whole off-spring,
Withoutten faile shall haue the samine thing,
And so at short him of all dignitie.
They quite denude for his infirmitie.

The seven Sages.

Out of his Realme as a begger him draue,
While he behou'd to beg among the laue,
In the meane time of Rome the Emperour,
Payed his dew det, wherefore was great delour,
Who was Father to Florentine so faire,
Of the Empire shee was appearand Aire,
And with auise of his counsell did wed,
Lodowick her loue, and brought him to her bed,
Wherethow hee was made principall Emperour,
And got the crowne thereof with great honour,
In that same time of France the Noble King,
Lodowicks Father in likewise made ending.
And payed his det, as naturall course him gaue,
As doth all thing that euer did life receiue.
And so Lodowick came emperour throu chance,
Suchlike hee was the mightie King of France.
About them both at once so did hee reigne.
And both at once hee had in gouerning.
Then Alexander who was lately deposed,
From his Kingdom, the which he should haue joyed
Heard tell for trueth Lodowick was Emperour.
And King of France, and thereof possessor.
Unto himselfe hee said and tooke in minde,
I will goe see if Lodowick bee kinde.
For diuers times I haue scopard my life,
Both for himse lfe and suchlike for his wife.
Now will I goe, and to him make my maine,
Hee will helpe mee I am sure and certaine,
So on a night Alexander vp rose,
Euen as hee might poorelie put on his clothes,

Hee

The seven Sages.

Hæ stepped forth with stafe into his hand,
With cop and clapper vnto the Emperours land,
When hæ come there, hæ sat downe at his gate,
Among the Leper some Almous for to get.
The Emperour come forth vpon a day,
Of his Palace, to sport him and to play.
After his play againe to Palace past,
And to Denner each one they bowed fast,
All the Lepper they clapped and they cryed,
But at that time all Almous was denyed,
So Alexander clapped as did the rest,
Though they got nought, to byd yet he thought best,
Vnto the time the Emperour was set,
Relæuing well some Almous for to get.
So vp he rose, and nere the gate hæ went,
Thereat knocked with meeke minde and intent.
The Porter said, Whose that that knockes so bold,
Quod hee, An poore with you some erand wold:
Requiring you for loue and charitie,
That yee will doe some small message for mee.
The Porter said, Whom to is that message,
Few is herein of whom yee haue knowledge.
Alexander said, Good friend with your pleasure,
Mine erand is vnto the Emperour.
The Porter said, Does your erand pertaine
To the Emperour I know not what yee meane,
Shew the matter, and what is your intent,
So I shall tell your tale incontinent,
Hee said, I you require for Gods loue,
And for his sake that sits in heauen aboue,

The seven Sages.

Go ye and tell vnto the Emperour,
A man is heir in seiknes and dolour,
Loth and leper, and lazarous ye see,
Requyrezeth his grace for part of charitie,
For Gods loue that creat hes all thing,
And Alexanders sake of Egypt King,
That he wil grant me licence in his hall,
To eate his meate befoze his nobles all.
The porter said, I wonder of your wit,
Within his hall that ye desire to sit.
For all his hall of noble men is fow,
And they at meit forsooth it they saw you,
They should abhorre and eate that tyme no more
I thinke it best to hold you still therfore.
Quod Alexander, I pray you of goodnes,
For Gods sake and for your gentlenes,
To your master ye wold shew my message,
Get I almons, ye shall not want your wage.
The Porter said, so farre as ye requyre,
For Gods loue, and heartly ye desire,
Your errand do, the same to take on hand,
While I returne see that ye heir still stand.
Then the porter past to the Emperour,
Hailling him with reuerence and honour:
Did his message as he had got command,
The Emperour heard and vnderstood fra hand.
When he heard the name of Alexander King,
Quod he in haist that man to me ye bzing.
How horrible or vgsun that he be.
In all good haist ye fetch him heir to me.

That

The seven Sages.

That he may eate his meate into my hall,
In my presence befoze my Lords all,
Then the porter vnto the gate is gone:
And Alexander bzought to the hall anone,
Ordaining him into the hall and place,
Where he might eate befoze the Emperours face,
When he was well refreshed at his owne will:
A Gentleman belyue he called him till,
Saying gude Sir requyre the Emperour,
If that it be his will and his pleasour,
For Gods loue first and king Alexanders syne,
He wold me giue an cup full of his wyne
The Gentleman said that will I doe to the,
But I belæue that such thing can not be.
For if ye once of his coup take a drinke,
To drinke therein he shall no more I thinke.
Yet not the les thy erand I shall do
Let him aduylse if he consents thereto.
The message then to the Emperour he shew,
But so soone as he the erand knew.
For Alexanders sake the Coup he send,
Full of wyne that of the best was kend.
Dranke his pleasure and then he put the rest,
In his bottell that time he thought it best.
Off his finger an small Gold ring he thzrew,
Which the Emperour long time befoze that knew,
Because the same he had giuen him befoze,
In token of loue and friendship euermore,
Which Alexander into the coup let fall.
Then bade the Coppez beare it thzow the hall,

The seven Sages.

To the Emperour and the same let him see,
Who said my friend I shall it doe truelie.
The coup and ring withoutten pzoces moze,
To the Emperour the copper soone it bure.
The Emperour then how soone this ring he saw,
Incontinent full well he did it know.
And wist right well it was the samin ring,
That he had giuen to Alexander King,
Into friendship when ather did depart,
Out of the court whereof he at his heart,
Was sorrowfull: for he knew no remead,
But Alexander his companioun was dead.
Or els he thought this pooze man marueloussie,
Had gotten this ring by some great ieopardie,
He commanded the Leper not depart,
While he had heard moze secreits of his heart,
For he knew not by fauour nor nothing
What man that was that had sent him the ring
After dinner he tooke him quietly,
And said tell me the trueth and veritie,
And fenzie not to tell me of this thing,
When where and how ye hapned on this ring.
Alexander said and pleis your maiestie,
What is the cause ye speir such thing at me.
We haue knowledge of this ring I persauie,
If it was yours ye know where ye it gaue.
The Emperour said right wonder well I know
The ring and man suchlike if I him saw.
Alexander said I meruell that can be,
We know the ring and no way knowes me,

The seven Sages.

For Alexander I am of Egypt King,
Sum tyme I was to whom ye gaue this ring.
When he that heard to his heart strak a stound
For verie hurt fell flatlings to the ground.
Then rent his robes, and kest his cloths him fro,
When he persaned Alexander was so.
With soze sighings and sobbings to him said,
My deare fellow, how is this on you laid?
Such soze seiknes and great infirmitie,
My heart it breaks such thing on you to see,
Ye are my life, my soule and my wellfaire,
My only friend and fellow but compaire.
Where is your corse that was so cleinly cleid?
Your bold bodie that was so fynely fed.
Your puissant pith and state that was so stout,
Your manly strength whereof each man had doubt?
Quod Alexander this great infirmitie,
And vncleannes which ye now see on me,
For the great faith, trew kyndnes and freindship
That ye shew when I left you in Egypt
To wed my wife: there your fidelitie
Caused this seiknes to chance vpon me.
For into bed with my wife when ye lay,
An naked sword ye layd betwixt you tway,
She beleueing it was not ye but I,
So freemedly with her in bed could lye
And for that cause had me at such hatrent,
An other Squire she chosed in louverent.
Betwixt them two purposed to poyson me,
Which is conuert in this infirmitie.

The seven Sages.

Goodth of my Realme they haue mee driuen & chaist
And to returne thereto I haue no trust.

The Emperour then tooke him about the neck,

For verie loue, and said in this effect.

O my most best beloued true brother,

Whom euermore I loued best aboue all other,

I sorrow soe in such sort you to see,

Without remeid mastered in miserie.

But yee must thole and take in patience,

And if there may bee found any defence,

Helpe or remeide that may your seiknes sane,

For gold or geir, but doubt yee shall it haue,

Wee shall not faile to fetch fyne Physitians,

With cunning Clarkes and perfit Practitians,

For yet shall mis for many Mediciners,

For for payment to prooue all Potingers.

With counsell of Masters and Doctors fine,

For all seiknes that can giue Medecine.

Into this neede if they can you supplie,

It shall not want for Gold geir nor money.

To get you helpe wee shall not spare to spend,

Though wee should seeke vnto the worlds end.

Wherefore bee blith and takenothing in thought,

Throug all the world your health it shall be sought.

Then to a Chalmer belue they could him bring,

Was well prepared wanting no kind of thing,

Of honestie nor yet was necessarie,

For ease nor health where his bed was and lair.

In this meane time the Emperour gart prepaire,

His messengers to passe and seeke all where,

Cunning

The seuen Sages.

Cunning Doctors, and Physicians profound,
That was expert in any land or ground,
Of whom there come to him in weekes three,
Thirtie Doctors cunning in all degree,
The most expert and had experience,
In such affaires belonging that Science,
Of sure supplie pertaining Physick syne.
And was extolled Masters of Medecine,
To whom anone the Emperour then said,
Of your comming Masters I am right glad.
This is the cause why I send for you all.
I haue a friend the which lies sicke and thrall,
Uncurable, which onelie was suspect,
As is leper, wherewith hee is infect,
Wherof if yee could make him haill and sound,
I would giue gold many a thousand pound,
All the riches I haue and other gære.
I would it giue to haue him haill and seere,
The Masters said, Wee shall doe diligence,
By Art, Physick, and naturall Science:
Together with all possibilitie,
Him to recure of his infirmitie,
Pleaseth your grace yæ must vs all pardoun,
Wee must haue sight of the principall persoun.
Which all thirtie at once when they him saw,
Incontinent his sicknes they did know.
And said, it was a sicknesse vncurable,
Which to remead no mortall man was able,
When the Emperour them heard deliuer so,
At his heart rote hee was right wonder woe,

The seven Sages.

Remitting all to the helpe and calling,
Of God aboue that helpe can all such thing.
The Emperour called vnto him godlie men,
Forth of all parts where that hee could them ken,
That were deuote, with minde and thought inward,
Desiring them right humbly with his heart,
That they would pray to God of his good Grace,
Thro'w their prayer if they could helth purchas,
To Alexander which was a King with crowne,
By their fasting and als deuotion.

And als himselfe fasted and prayed daylie,
That God might haue of his good friend pitie.

Upon a day Alexander alone,

Lying in bed, in heart all woe begone,

Praying to God for some helpe and supplie,

He heard a voyce, saying to him on hie,

Alexander, if that the Emperour,

Desireth thine helth thine helpe and thy succour,

Let him goe sone with his owne hands twa,

His two young sonnes incontinent hee sla,

The which his wife at one burden them bair.

At the last time the was in child beddair,

Wesh thy bodie with the two Babies blode,

Thy flesh shall bee as faire as clene as gode,

As euer it was in any time besore,

Or as the flesh of a babie new borne.

Alexander heard and thus said to him self,

I thinke it not needfull this tale to tell,

For to be showane its not expedient,

Nature thereto by no way will consent.

The seven Sages.

No wonder was his heart for to bee wa,
For a stranger his owne two sonnes to sla.
Though I bee now in such extremitie,
Such a vaine voice shall not bee showane for mee.
Yet not the lesse the Emperour night and day,
Continually at his deuotion lay,
Praying to God to send helpe and supplie,
To Alexander King of Egypt should bee,
So at the last come to the Emperour.
An voice saying, why maketh thou more dolour,
For to get helth to Alexander King,
Since to himselfe is showane the samine thing?
The Emperour then to Alexander went,
Saying, bee blith and merrie in intent,
O my good friend, since God of his goodnesse,
Hes showane remeid and health for your sicknes,
Unto your selfe alone so secretly,
I pray you shew what fashioun it shall bee.
God is remeade to all vpon him calleth,
To them supplie in sundrie sortsh he sheweth,
And since so is, such secrets to you showane,
I would the same yee should make to mee knowne,
To get your helth, if I might helpe therein,
That to welfare againe wee might you win:
I cure no gold nor counts no worlods geir,
So I againe might haue you haill and feir:
I count no cost, nor yet none other thing,
So you againe to helth it may sone bring.
Hold not your minde into no sort from mee.
In any thing that may your helth supplie.

The seven Sages.

For might I deale your seiknes into thre,
Ye should not haue so great infirmitie,
My wife and ye the two part ye should haue,
And the third part my selfe it should receaue,
Knew I as ye where ye may haue support,
It to receaue the time should be right short,
Therefore feare not for me to tell the trueth,
To help your selfe see na way ye be sueth.
Then Alexander answered with minde so meik
Howbeit that I fyftene tymes were more seik,
Euen at the point of the most cruell dead,
I can not shaw the cause of my remead.
For I would not that such an thing were showane,
For I would not to any make it knowne,
For to be showane it is so odious.
And to nature so done contrarious,
Into this cace ye man hold me excused.
To haue my health such way quite I refused.
The Emperour said my onely friend and Brother,
Whom with my heart I loue aboue all vther,
Haue me in traist haue me in no despaire,
But the haill trueth I pray you me declare,
The thing is not possible to be done,
You for to cure but it shall be had soone.
Therefore I you requyre of brother hood,
Goe not from me that may be your remead,
Alexander said since euen so is your will,
The whole fassoun I will declare you till,
With hartlie minde humbly praying your grace,
Since your will is, that I shaw you the cace,

The seven Sages.

That ye will take my words in patience,
And pardoun me where that I make offence,
For ye will thinke my words farre by reason,
Feid were therefore your grace grant me pardoun
With and reason my talke will both impugne,
Best were therefore in tyme to hold my tongue.
The Emperour said for his saik that you bought,
Withouthin feir shew me your minde and thought
Ye shall me finde to you trust and constant,
Unto your health there is nocht ye shall want,
Therefore shew forth your minde if it you please,
What ye shall say nothing shall me disease.
Quod Alexander I will please your intent,
As it was showane to me in verament.
Yet once againe your grace I will protest,
That my sharp words your minde nothing molest,
By an great voyce to me it was reuealed,
By an strange way how that I may be healed,
Your owne two sonnes your selfe them for to slae,
And my bodie wesch with the blood of tha,
This is the way wherethow I may be haill,
Which is to you an thing vnnaturall,
That the father his owne two sonnes should kill,
With his owne hands for any strangers heill,
And is contrare the course of naturall Law,
This was the cause such thing I durst not shaw.
The Emperour said ye faill farre to me there,
That calleth your selfe to be here an stranger,
For in true faith and so my soule haue seill,
As my owne selfe I loue you euen als weill,

The seven Sages.

For if I had ten bairns perchance and ma,
To get your health there should not one of thea
None be vnslaine, I shortly you declare,
Of this matter now we will speake no more
Goe y^e to rest and make no more adoe,
With helpe of God all to gude shall come to,
The Emperour he waited day and night,
And watched about what time that best he might,
Cum to his chake his owne two sonnes to sla
So on a day the Emprice forth could ga,
With her Ladies airly in the morning,
To take pastime into an greene gairding,
The Emperour saw, and to chalmer him sped,
Where the two Babes lay sleiping on their bed,
Incontinent his whinger forth he drezw,
With his owne hands his owne two sonnes he slew
Cutted there throates and then kepped the blood,
Howbeit the same contrair his heart it stode,
So meruell was howbeit his heart was wo,
He them begot and were his childzen two.
And with that blood Alexander did wash,
With his owne hands, all his body and flesh,
Which was als fair incontinent and clene,
As any time befoze had euer bene,
And als good like in persoun and visage,
As when he was but twentie yeres of age.
The Emperour then knewe weill by his colour,
By his fassoun, his face and portratour,
It was but doubt Alexander truelie,
Whereof in heart right wonder blyth was he.

The seven Sages.

For he before knew not but this and so,
Whether it was Alexander or no.
But then doubtles Alexander he knew,
Without despaire it was Alexander true,
Kist him and said, O my good tender friend,
Since first we knew and ever more hes bene,
Of your persoun I haue the knowledge,
Of your fauour your face and your visage,
Which many tymes I desyred to see,
To eate and drinke and be in companie:
Blest be the tyme such children I begat,
That hes you brocht to the state ye are at.
But yet none wist that the children was flane,
But Alexander and the Emperour alone.
The Emperour said since God of his goodnes,
Hes maid you haill of all your sair seiknes,
I shall ordain for you right quietly,
To passe an space an honest cumpany,
Out from this place but eight or myls ten,
To that effect that none heere shall you ken,
And on the morne ye shall send an message,
Of your cumming making to me knowledge,
Then shall I cum with blyth and merie spreit,
Into all haist cast me you for to meit,
Then still with me allwayes ye shall rentaine,
While we awyle to get your realme againe.
Of this counsell Alexander was content,
So as they said was done incontinent,
On the next day came to the Emperour,
An messenger who hailed him with honour.

Shew

The seven Sages.

shewing to him as they had gotten command:
King Alexander of Egypt was at hand.
The Emprice heard and was right wonder glaid,
To the Emperour shee hasted her and said,
O my good Lord bee blith and make good cheir,
King Alexander they say is comming heere,
Whom with wee oft in great blithnesse haue beene,
This many day bygone hes not him seene,
And would your grace bee so good to make gate,
Him for to meit hee would bee blith I waite
And my Ladies into our best Array,
Shall passe with you and meete him by the way,
This being done, as yet nothing shee knew,
That the Father his owne two sonnes flew.
The Emperour said, if that it bee your will.
That same journey blithly I will goe till,
Then rode they forth an honest companie,
Lords, Knights, Ladies with great solemnitie,
Euen as they rode royallie through the street,
In the mid way they Alexander did meete,
Who hailed other with all humilitie,
With laude and gloze and honour that might bee,
There was kindnesse and there was great kissing,
There was blithnesse, there was in Armes bracing,
There was kneeling and there was courtesie.
With reuerence and great solemnitie,
After talking with good and true intent,
All together into the Palace went.
Time come of meate all was at table set,
Nothing wanted that needfull was to get.

The seven Sages.

Alexander was set at the hie deale,
With the Emperour and the Emprice at meale.
As they were talking into merines.
The Emperour said vnto his owne Emprice,
O Florentyne mine owne good wife and loue,
I thinke mine heart in ioy exalted aboue,
That yee doe make Alexander such cheere,
And is so blith that hee is comming heere,
Shee said forswith could I it better make,
It should bee done for Alexanders sake.
Should not his comming beene to vs glaidnes,
And in speciall to you a great kindnes?
For yee had not come to this dignitie,
Where yee are now for sooth had not beene hee,
And diuers times hee hes saued your life.
Principall hee was that got mee to your wife,
The Emperour said, Your wit well I allow,
That thinks on them that was so good to you,
Then I pray you take good heid what I say,
Into this Hall saw yee not the last dag
A loth Leper befoze your table sate?
Both meat and drinke as yee saw some hee gat.
And for Gods loue, and King Alexanders sake,
Desired a Drinke, which I gart to him take.
Shee said, My Lord, that man right well I saw,
A more vglie yet neuer one did know.
The Emperour said, One thing I you demand,
Which I beleue yee will discusse fra hand,
I put the cace that Leper man had beene
King Alexander, that yee see with your eene.

And

The seven Sages.

And his remeade and helth in your hand lay,
Euen with the blood of your owne Sonnes tway,
Behou'd soz to be bathed all about,
Would yee not then with a stiffe heart and stout,
Right well consent that both their bloods were shed,
To the intent that his health might hee had?
Their throates cutted, and doe them both to dead,
So Alexander therethrow might get remead,
And make him haile euen as yee see him now?
That would I doe (quod shee) God I abow.
Had wee ten sonnes gotten vs two betweene,
I would consent to see them with mine eene.
Incontinent to see them dead and slaine,
Into that case to get his health againe,
They being slaine with my power and pith,
Mine own two hands should weth him well therewith
Rather noz I should leaue him in such need,
I would not cure to see their throates bleed,
For God againe might send vs Bairnes anew,
But neuer againe a friend so traist and trew.
When the Emperour thir words by her heard said,
Into his heart hee was both blith and glaid,
And said to her, Good Florentine my wife,
Had yee rather saue Alexanders life,
And healed of soze noz haue your sonnes liuand,
Trewly (quod shee) that heir I take on hand.
Because therefoze to him yee are so kinde,
I will you shew the inwart of my minde,
The loth Leper that sat into my baw,
That I and yee both eat and drinke wee saw,

Shee

The seven Sages.

Shee said hee was most leper Lazarous,
That euer come within a noble house,
I merueled great wherefore that thing was wrought
Within your Hall such a Bairne should be brought.
To you I trowed it should come in your offence.
That such persons should come in your presence:
But since your grace suffered such thing to bee,
I was content and well allowed with mee.
The Emperour said, Had yee the trueth then kend
As I beloeue yee had not beene offended,
Good Florentine now I will make you sure.
Which man it was that sat on your Hall floore.
I will you show but anie feynyeing,
Alexander it was of Egypt King.
Which at your table now sitteth presentlie,
Quod shee, my Lord, I thinke that cannot bee,
Alexander that now sitteth at our table,
That is a thing not liklie to bee able,
For Alexander that sitteth heere presentlie,
Is haill and feir, pleasant to looke and see,
Without sicknesse of bodie sound and cleine,
Blyth of visage, with two fair chryskall eyne,
Curious of coyse an comelie creature,
So was hee not that sat into the flure.
But of his lyze was loth and horrible,
And had sicknesse which was incurable,
And so is not now Alexander King,
And I maruell yee should say such a thing.
Mine heart (quod hee) God hes send him remead,
Thow mee and you, and by our sonnes dead,

The seven Sages.

My heart nor hand forsooth no alw I stood,
To cut their throats, and bath him in their blood,
So by Gods grace he is maid haill and seir,
An clein persoun as ye now see him heir.
Then she began to mourne and to make sorow,
As nature wold, howbeit she said besorow,
That she had rather see all her children dead,
Into that case or he wanted remead.
Yet not the les the naturall course and kynde,
In this behalfe changed both thought and minde,
The heartlie loue, and Motherlie pitie,
Which nature giues in the Mother to be,
Could not suffer, nor yet no way sustaine,
But with soze hart she grat with both her eine.
The Emperour perceaued her take such pyne,
So stanch her sturt said O good Florentyne,
Thoch ye be two, I can no way you wyte,
For well I know ye had loue and delyte,
Inwart kyndnes vnto your sonnes two,
I can well thinke that your heart should be two,
Yet not the les, I pray you cease of sorow,
All will be well I finde you God to bozrow,
The nourishes hearing of thir tythands,
For great heart bzek they cryed & wzong their hands
They knew nothing what for to doe or say,
Past to the Chalmer where the two bairnes lay,
Belæuing well for no vther remeid,
But finde the bairnes in their bed lying deid.
They fand them both at their pastyme playing,
In great blythnes, and giuing God laing,

Peuer

The seven Sages.

Never more blyth since first houre they were borne,
Nothing knowing that there two throats wer shorn,
The nourishes vnto the Emperour went,
And how all was they shew incontinent:
How his two Sonnes was liuand blyth and glaid.
And how about there two necks that they had
An cirkill of Gold where that the knyfe had gane,
Which knyfe from them so soone there life had tane,
Wherethow there was great mirth in the citie,
In the Palice and all the companie:
That God such grace to thir two babes had granted,
That being flaine their liues yet they not wanted,
Wherefore there was thzough the cities and townes,
Great prayers maid with many Disouns,
Louing the Lord life to thir babies lent,
And granted health to seik and impotent.
Bankets they maid, with ioy and merines,
Gentrels maid mirth ceased was all sadness,
Quene Florentyne she blist that samin day,
She did consaue and beaze such sonnes tway,
No thing was there the space of fourtie dayes,
But alkin mirth blythnes sports and playes,
Great toznaments with bairded hors running,
Sum vther dayes with grewhounds Deir hunting,
This being done the Emperour did prepare,
Ane great armie of manheid singulare,
And past away with all their fellowship,
With Alexander againe into Egypt,
Set him againe into his royaltie:
In his owne Kealme with great solemnitie.

Resto

The seven Sages.

Restored him haill to all his possessiones,
With due service of his Lords and Barrouns.
That gude itwell King Alexanders Quene.
In Adulterie that so long time had bene,
With her louer what he was knight or squire
As they deserued was both bzint in an fyre,
In this meane time the Emperour chanced to haue,
Ane fair sister the which to wise he gaue,
To Alexander and fortified the band,
Of great kyndnes which euer moze did stand,
Betwixt them two with heartie minde and thought,
What the one did the other wold haue wrought.
So Alexander being set down at rest,
In his realme, the Emperour thought it best,
For to returne againe to his Emprye,
And tooke gudenight at their owne hearts desire.
They were right wo to part ye may consider,
But yet ay stil friends may not byde together.
So they departed with merines and ioy,
Alexander homeward did him conuoy.
Then after this Alexander him drest.
To guide his realme alwayes as he thought best,
With manlines and wisdom in him sell
He vanqueist all against him did rebell.
His enemies about him all he danted,
So thow wisdom of his will nought he wanted,
When he was in all his gloze peace and might,
Into his minde it come vpon an night,
How his father in the Sea did him sling,
Because he shew what the wilde byrde did sing:

And

The seven Sages.

And his Mother thereto did well consent,
Therefore he send message incontinent.
Howbeit they did an far way from him dwell,
The messenger yet he bade to them tell,
That Alexander who was King of Egypt,
Wold to them cum with an great fellowship
To eat and drink, and with them make good cheare,
In that countrie sum nouels for to heare:
The messenger blythlie they did receaue,
And rich rewards suchlike they to him gaue:
Saying their seruice at every time and houre,
Should be readie at the great things plesour,
Howbeit they were not worthie of such thing
For to ressaue with them an Crowned King:
Yet not the les, and pleis his grace to cum,
With all our hearts he shail be right welcum.
The messenger againe to the King went,
As they him said he shew incontinent,
And what reward with blythnes they him gaue,
And how blythly the King they should receaue,
And how ready they were at his command,
Him for to serue all tyme with heart and hand.
What euer his grace gaue them commandement,
Whereof the King was blyth, and well content.
The day become the King tooke his iourney,
With diuers Lords to passe the ready way,
Where his Father and Mother made dwelling,
Unknowne to them of any vther thing,
But he was King of Egypt and none vther,
For yet none knew of his Father and Mother,

Except

The seven Sages.

Except himselfe which knew well all the cate.
And when they drew neir hand his Fathers place,
As they come forth ryding on their journey,
The knight his father met him by the way.
And when hee saw the king command with crown,
Incontinent off his Horse lighted downe,
With all honour and all good reuerence.
Upon his knee making obedience.
And when hee saw his father take such paines,
Hee tooke him vp and bade him ride againe,
So cheike for cheike to the Castell they rode,
Where there was cheire with all aboundance made
And when they come vnto the Castell yet,
His mother come and with blithnes him met.
Kneeling to him, hee lighted and her kist,
But what hee was the sooth nothing shee wist.
Shee said to him since it pleaseeth your Grace:
To visit vs at this time and our place,
Wee doe to vs your seruands great honour,
And wee are blith that it is your pleasour,
For yee are welcōme to all that we finde here,
Euen as we may wee shall make you good chēere.
The time of day drew neir, all bownded to dine.
His father came with a silver Basin,
With Ros-water vnto his knee kneillingand,
And his Mother with Towell in her hand,
Saying meikly, pleaseeth your grace to welsh,
And thereafter with some meat yon refresh,
It is readie the chēere wee may you make,
Praying your Grace, in patience to take.

The

The seven Sages.

The King this saw, hee smiled and then said,
Unto himselfe there is none can avoide,
For set aside the Godlie providence,
Hee will haue done by his perfitte prudence,
The Nightingals song now I persauie it true
Which long agoe to my Father I shew.
When that hee come to his window and sang,
That they should both bee right blith for to gang,
With the Towell and Basen in their hands,
Hee for to serue as they were my seruands,
If I would thole them such thing for to doe,
Now the same thing and mater is come to.
This in himselfe hee said, And no man knew,
For to no man as yet such thing hee shew,
So hee would not them thole to doe such thing,
Notobest that time hee was a crowned King.
Saying Sir Knight, I will honour your Age,
Hee nor your wife shall doe me no such homage,
It becommeth not such two Aged to bring,
Water to weth, howbeit I bee a King,
Take in patience forsooth I say you true,
For I haue heere other seruands anew,
Then said the Knight, to vs it were honour,
So that it were vnto your Grace pleasure.
But since cace is yee will not thole vs doe,
By reasoun wee are not worthe thereto,
Then said the King, I doe honour to Age,
Such office gaineth to younger personage.
Then to denner was this good King set downe,
And after him his Lords of great renowne.

When

The leuen ages.

When he was set hee gart set downe his mother,
On his owne side, his father on the other,
Who intierely beheld ay his visage,
If they could haue of him any knowledge,
But none they had: eild sicknes and labour,
Caused them misken his fastoun and sauour,
The Dinner done, the King to Chalmer went,
For his Father and Mother hee after sent,
Who come to him with all obedience,
Rendring to him seruise and reuerence.
Hee commanded all persons passe aside,
None but the Knight and his wife to abide,
At whose command as hee bade so was done,
Then was the Dooze on them thre closed soone,
Then said the King to the Knight and his wife,
Haue yee none Wainres: quod they none vpon life,
None no? Daughter at this time haue wee none,
And to get moe, wee trust the time be gone.
Then said the King, I speare for time bygone.
Had yee any, or had yee neuer none?
Then said the Knight, for a Sonne wee had one:
But it is long since hee was dead and gone,
Then said the King, In what death died hee,
Then said the Knight a naturall death surelie,
Then said the King, be that not true but false,
No fault to mee and doubleth to mee your take.
Then said the Knight your Grace I now requyre
What is the cause yee seruentlie desire,
And to such thing what causeth you take heede,
With such effect to speir after his deade

The seven Sages.

Then said the King, without cause doe I it nought,
How your son died shew mee your mind & thought,
If yee will not shew forth the veritie,
A shamefull death but doubt yee shall both die.

When that they heard, they fell downe on their knees

Asking him grace, forgivenessse and mercie,

Then said the King, Yet will I honour Age,

I couet not of you so great homage,

I grant you lieue befoze mee for to stand,

And so hee raisde them both vp by the hand,

To that intent I come not in your place,

You to betray in any sort or cace,

For it is giuen mee well to vnderstand,

Wee put your sonne to death with your owne hand,

And if that such thing come to the iudgement,

Wee will bee both condemn'd incontinent.

Wherefoze to mee the verie trueth yee shaw,

It is danger for such to bide the law,

Shew mee the trueth. and I shall saue you baith,

From all perill, and keepe you from all skaith.

Then said the Knight, My life, Sir, to mee grant,

Of the true trueth, one word yee shall not want.

Then said the King Feare not the trueth to say,

And on credence, here I shall saue you tway.

Then said the Knight, Wee had a sonne truelie,

Who well was seene in cunning and Clergie,

Sicker cunning hee had in science seven,

In all Planets that moued vnder Heauen,

Wee knew their course, and all their strange aspects

Their pith their power, and all their firme effects.

The seven Sages.

All herbes and trees right wonder well he knew,
What strength they had, what pith and what vertus
There was no fowle that euer flew with wing,
But he knew well in song what they did sing,
Into so far, there was no herb that sprang,
He knew the pith, and als the fowles song.
Upon a day befoze vs he could stand,
With basen, water, and towell in hand,
In the meane time that bonie fowle of flight,
The pigthingale at our window did light,
And so began to sing her notes full good,
Well were the man (queth I) that vnderstood,
Von sweet singing. and what the bird doth mene,
Quoth he, father so ye will not be tene,
I should you shew what von bird sings so sweet,
And every note I shall to you interpret.
Quoth I, deare sonne, I pray thee to me shaw,
To say the trueth, of no man stand thou aw:
Quoth he, father, forsooth I take great feare,
It shall you craib, her song when it you heare,
Say, nay, said I, of that ye haue no doubt,
The birds song I pray thee tell me out:
Quoth he, von bird, she meanes into her song,
My mother and ye are able to lue so long.
While that ye stand befoze me as seruands,
And to be blyth to hold water to mine handes,
If that I will you suffer such to doe,
Quoth I, that day thou shalt neuer come to,
And so at shoyt ere euer I toke rest,
Into the sea for to drowne I him kest,

The seven Sages.

Then said the King to you had bene no skaith,
Unto his hands ye had holden water baith,
I think it had bene to you both plesour,
That your one Sonne had cum to such honour.
Then said the knight that same thing I confes,
In great furie I did it and wroones.

Wit and wisdome was went, will was ouer man,
Right and reason and ruth quite from me ran.
So when wit wants, and strength of reason leist,
I count a man no better nor a beast,
That runneth on head and looketh to no reason,
Right so did I when I my sonne did doun.
Then said the King I thinke it was follie,
You so to worke contrair the maiestie,
Of God alone and his great prouidence,
His wit his will and mightie Ordinance,
We might well wit God of his sapience,
That to your sonne had lend him such science,
To know the voyce of birds in the air,
And it was God that caused her to come there,
To sing that song as God her had direct it,
For in no sort she might no way neglect it.
Therefore let none the man most mightiest,
Cast him to worke contrair which God hes drest,
For it passeth wit power and puissance,
To worke contrair his mightie ordinance.
Now ye shall know the trueth and veritie,
I am your sonne which ye kest in the Sea,
For the great God of his mightie Godhead,
Hes me preserved from all danger of dead.

And

The seven Sages.

And by his grace hes bzought me to this state,
As I am now and for me did debait,
For his foresight no way can be down smored,
But evermore the same will be decozed,
As worthe is for none can worke contraire,
His providence which surely I declare.

Then the Father and Mother hearing that,
For feir and ioy fell to the earth down flat,
Whome he tooke vp with all humilitie,
Saying Father and Mother feir not me,
Hane ye no doubt of all that I haue said,
Rather be blyth ioyous merrie and glaid,
With helpe of God no danger shall you deir,
What ever ye thinke I pray you take no feir,
Ye shall aill nocht in geir nor yet in persoun,
Of all bygane I grant you plane pardoun,
For ye shall finde that my might and wellfare,
Shall be your gloze, for now and ever more,
Into this lyfe so long as I endure,
I haue reasoun, ye two me got and bure.

So with blythnes with hat into his hand,
He kist them both with merie heart laughand.

Then the mother she grat right piteously,
And the Father the teare fell in his Cie.

Then said the King be still and weip ye nocht,
For in my realme with blis ye shall be bzought,
And with all gloze there shall ye honoured be,
With all blythnes worship and dignitie.

Above my selfe except my kingly croun,
Which is reserved but to my owne persoun.

The seven Sages.

So in that place he left certaine seruands,
To rule and guide their roumes, rents, and lands,
Tooke his father, and mother to him hame,
Where they liu'd still in honour and good fame,
All their life-time while God to death them drest,
Guided the Realme in iustice, peace and rest,
Unto the time course was past of nature,
Ended their liues onely to Gods pleasure.

How the Emprice was condemned to dead,
With her loue without mercy or remeade.

Then Dioclesiane said to the Emperour,
Father, this tale I told to your pleasour;
Which I beleue, right well ye vnderstand,
Yea, euery word (quoth he) sonne I warrand,
It is a tale to be noted, I say,
Not one better I heard this many day.
Then said the sonne, and please your majestie,
Howbeit that God had giuen such grace to me,
Of wit, wisdome, and other great cunning,
Of diuers things hath lent me vnderstanding,
Yet this should in no wise minish your right,
Nor your honour, your majestie nor might,
But rather should the same eike and augment;
By right, reason, and als equall judgement,
So in likewise the Kings græ and estate,
Which was by God onely predestinate,
Send by the bird to sing that he might heare,
Which in that case was Gods messenger,
For had not bene, God gaue that bird such grace,

Sh

The seven Sages.

Shee had not sung such singing in that place,
The Sonnes honour and als his dignitie,
Tooke none honour from his Father wee see.
For to his Mother it did none hinderance,
But rather was their honours to aduance,
For as yee heard, they were honour'd alwayes,
Into his Realme during their liues and dayes,
Then said againe to him the Emperour,
I perceiue well the sonnes great honour,
Can no way pare the fathers might and gloze,
But rather ay to make it more and more:
Therefore I will the whole Empire resigne,
Into your hands, and yee therefore bee King.
And guide the same, and haue the rule and stære,
For I am olde, and may not burthen beere,
But rather would bee set at rest and ease,
And yee the Realme to guide as yee best please,
For I may not endure such businesse:
By reason of mine age and feeblenesse:
Then said the sonne, Sauing your graces will.
To that sentence, no wise grant will I till,
But yee shall ay haue the Authozitie,
During your life, euermore aboue mee,
To charge, command, to bid, and for to doe,
In all affaires that pertain'd you to,
All businesse that is laborious.
Actes and Crands, weightie and ponderous,
Alwayes I will accept them vpon mee,
You for to serue, as is my great duetie,
And euer shall the samine night and day,

The seven Sages.

To your pleasure in so farre as I may,
The Emperour then commanded his Justice,
In Iudgement sit, and doe forth his office,
And the Emprice in p[re]sence to cause bring,
With her Rebald, clad in womenis clothing,
Whom next her selfe hee caused for to stand,
Then her Ladies in order neare her stand,
Then Dioclesiane to the Emperour said,
Father, your Quene your honour hath degraid,
Duer all the world you ar great Emperour,
And it p[er]teines to your Grace and Honour,
To doe justice to all the same requires,
For the same thing your Majestie desires:
Aswell to poore, as to the rich alway,
Equall justice you should minister ay.
Now I desire, that yee give right sentence,
Of the vntueth, falsed and great offence,
Done and alledged by the Emprice falselie,
By counsell of her loue in contrare mee.
By whose false meanes seuentimes I was forth led
To the gallous to leaue my life in wed.
Als to your Grace vnfaithfull she hath bene,
Of her bodie, not guiding as a Quene,
Which is well p[ro]oued into your owne p[re]sence,
By manie signes, and perfect euidence:
Upon the which I aske and als desires,
Justice and right, even as the cause requires:
To your justice I would yee give command,
To give sentence but delatours fra hand,
When the Emprice heard this soze petition.

Upon

The seuch Sages.

Upon the Earth then flatlings thee sell downe,
At the Emperour asked grace and mercie,
But in no sort such thing there could not bee,
According to the Law hee had proceeded,
To giue sentence confozme vnto her deede,
Then bade pause well to whom the deed was done,
By whom, when, where, how long, or yet how sone,
Then thereafter to make the punishment,
As pleased the Judge to giue forth his Iudgement.
Then said the Judge, No way I can her clenge,
For her owne deede it selfe it doth reuenge,
The perfect pzoofe of her Rebald and Inaue.
Themselfe both files, as all men may perceiue,
Moreouer the fault it is leese Majestie,
Done in contrare the Crownes dignitie.
Into so farre as the deuil de his bed,
Then his one sonne to gallous cause be led
Therefore I giue in open Audience,
And pronounces now for extreame sentence,
That the Empzice bee bound to an Horse-taile:
Through all the Streets of the Citie her traile,
Till she come to the place burnt for to be,
For her preparte, that euery man may see,
And als we giue on her Rebald sentence,
For his knaerie and his peruerse offence,
Contrare the Crowne, mercilesse to be martyde,
On the Rats rein, hanged, drawne and quarterde:
After that, his flesh to be casten to Wykes,
To be deuourde with Dogs vnder the Wykes,
And with the fowles that fle into the Aire.

The

The seven Sages.

The Dogs leavings to take vp to their skaire,
In memorie that hee durst so presume,
In contempt of the great Emperour of Rome.
This sharpe sentence wee pronounced openlie,
To all people, and does it ratifie.
Makes the same knowne, and to all men patent,
As well absent, as they that are present,
So they were both conforme to their offence:
Done and demained according to sentence,
Giuen and pronounc'd by that most awfull iudge,
Wherefra remead they had none, noz refuge.
But suffered death with everlasting shame.
And ay to bꝛoke of great Harlots the name,
As worthe was, for why continuall sin,
With indur'd heart euer to liue therein,
But feare of God, or any repentance,
Caus'd them suffer such dulefull sad sentence.
Howbeit that man such bawdzie did not know,
Yet God in Heauen right well it hard and saw,
For all things are to his Cine eye patent:
Therefore hee found a suttile instrument,
To make such thing to mans sight bꝛe kend,
Thus may yee see of this Emprice the end:
Praying Great G O D, of vs to haue mercie.
And vs forgiue: Amen so mot it bꝛ.

A declaration to the Emprice
after her death.

O Fairbleffe feeble foole, O ugly hote holed hūre.
O poysonde paddocks poole, O mischant mad monsture,
Curst

The seuen Sages.

Curs'd catine creature, O Sathans seede all shent,
That euer yet wrought nature, or yet to life was lent:
Where was thy wisdom went? when such folly thou fand,
Thy lust thou may lament, that euer tooke such on hand:
Thou hast lost life and land, and all thy royall rout,
Thy state no way could stand, it was so stinking stout.
Upon thee, all cries out, fy, fy for very shame,
All womens seede does shout upon thy filthie name,
Ay waiied be the wombe, that brought thee in this life,
Euer to brooke such blame, woe woorih the wicked wife,
Rooted in sturt and strife, thy bow was euer bended,
Therefore but sword or knife, thy life now thou hast ended.
So greatly thou offended unto an innocent,
That thou would neuer mendit into this life present.
Thou would neuer repent, but wrought wrong with iniures,
Now with shame thou art shent, head patron to all hures:
Ay whyle this World endures, euer to brooke that name,
With all quicke creatures, with slander, lacke and shame.

The conclusion of this Worke.

NOW our Empzice hath suffered, dead, and gone,
Therefore as now we will let her alone,
With her harlot, whose dayes they haue ill spendend,
An ill entrie, for common is ill ended.
As well appeared indeede betwixt them tway,
Of them as now no farder will I say.
But in all haste goe finish forth our booke,
Because the same to doe we undertooke,
Therefore as now more time we will not spend,
But shew at short of the good Emperours end,
Within few dayes after this busines,

The

The seven Sages.

The Emperour he tooke an soze seiknes,
As pleased God, and payed his naturall det,
As the tyme came, and as the terme was set,
Dioclesiane then tooke the steir on hand,
And Emperour was of that countrie and land.
Kewled the Emppze with wisdome and prudence,
Held his Masters in dayly reuerence.
By whose wisdome, his counsell and desyre,
He guyded well his kingdome and Emppze.
That he pzeelled all his pzedecessours,
In riches, Justice, wisdome and honours.
Of his Leiges such loue he still conquest,
That ou'r all thing in earth they lou'd him best.
His Masters als they lou'd him ouer all thing.
With all seruice, as their true Lord and King.
And so ended their dayes in great honour,
In ioy and mirth, and to the great pleasour,
Of God alone, to whom all honour be,
Laud, praise, impyre, triumph and dignitie,
Kingdome, renowne, and ioy perpetuall,
Louing and loue, obedience ouer all:
Helth and vertue, and euerlasting gloze,
Into all woꝝlds both now and euermoze,
Be to that Lord with all humilitie,
And to distill an drop of his mercie,
On vs sinners, his glozie that we may see it
To his pleasure say every man so be it.

Finis quod Rolland.



A short declaration, where and when, and at
whose request this booke was translated
out of Prose into Meter.

AT the request of my Ant called Kair,
In roustie Ryme this quair I did translaire,
Of all trim tearmes as ye may see denude,
Because she me protested air and lait,
All strange tearmes to cast out of my gait,
Saying to me she them not vnderstude,
Requyring als that I would be so gude,
Womens honour to holde vp and estait,
As ye may see I durst not else but dude.

So in fewin weekes this quair was clene compleit,
Out of plaine prose now keiping meters feir;
Within the fort and Towre of Tamralloun,
When the English float besyde Inchkeith did fleit,
Vpon the sea in that great birniug heate,
Both Scots and English of Leith lay at the toun,
With sharpe assiege, and garneist garisoun,
On ather syde where findrie lost the sweit,
That same ryme I made this translation.

In merines since my Ant caused me make it,
If you requyre good readers for to take it
In patience, where faults are found correct them,
Yet were I laith ouer far that it were lacked,
If sum verse halts, or any colours cracked
For my request take out a pen and bleck them,
Because for haist perchance I did neglect them.
For if so be I can no way defend it
Excuse it selfe, and so this quair is ended,

The Author sayes to the Booke.

IN haste goe hyc thee to some hole,
And hide thee, be not call'd a Booke:
Goe cōme thee ouer all blacke with cole,
Goesmeere thee ouer with smiddie smooke,
Or scoure pots to some greefie cooke,
Or in some kitchin turne the speet,
Among Ladies thou dare not looke:
For they will on thee with their feet,
For men of good thou art not meet,
They will thee hold of small auaille,
What rests there then, but yeeld thy spirit,
Or to tyr'd tincklers tell thy tale,
Thy roustie ryme among them raile,
For honest men few will set by thee,
And I sweare by the rude of *Craile*,
Touching my part, I heere denie thee.
My counsell is that thou cause cry thee,
Among Cowelinks and common hures,
All good women they may desie thee,
Of all thy crackes they take no cures:
But fānd fillockes vp in the moores,
Who first you reades, some skinner hang them,
See on them thou worke all injures,
Passe on and send thy selfe among them.

FINIS.

